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ABSTRACT

Providing a way to organize and document third- through sixth-grade student writing through the use of writing folders and other organizing aids, this book is for educators who believe that writing and word processing strategies and skills are best taught as students do real writing for a variety of readers. The book includes mini-lessons to introduce writing, word processing, and recordkeeping procedures. Chapters in the book are: (1) Writing, Computers, and Folders; (2) Prewriting and Writing; (3) Revising; (4) Editing; (5) Publishing; and (6) Portfolio Assessment. Forms on which to record writing topics, writing skills and strategies, pieces written by file title and date, and word processing skills and strategies are attached. (RS)

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COMPUTERS AND THE WRITING PROCESS

TEACHER'S GUIDE TO ORGANIZING AND EVALUATING STUDENT WRITING

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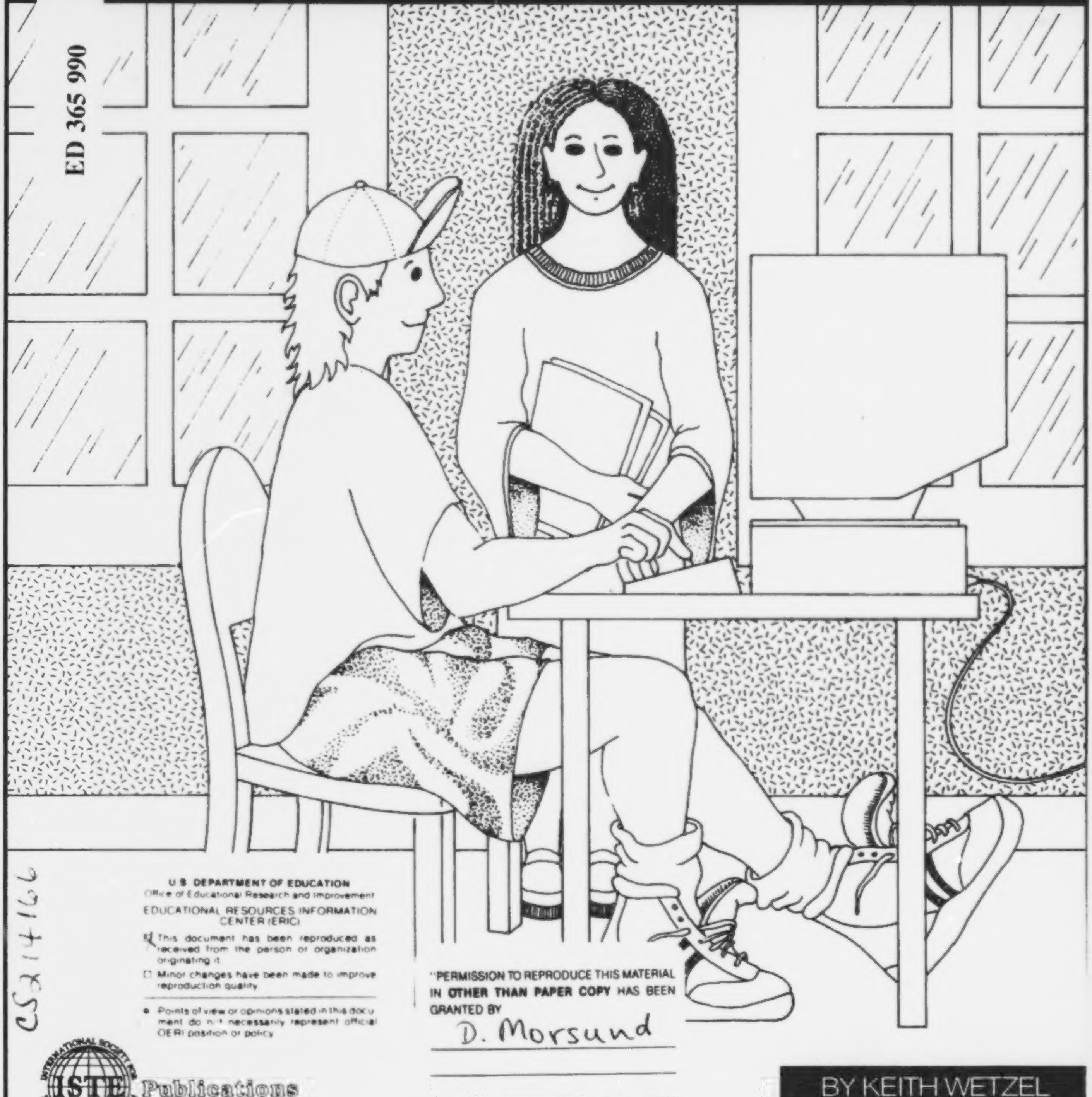

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BY KEITH WETZEL

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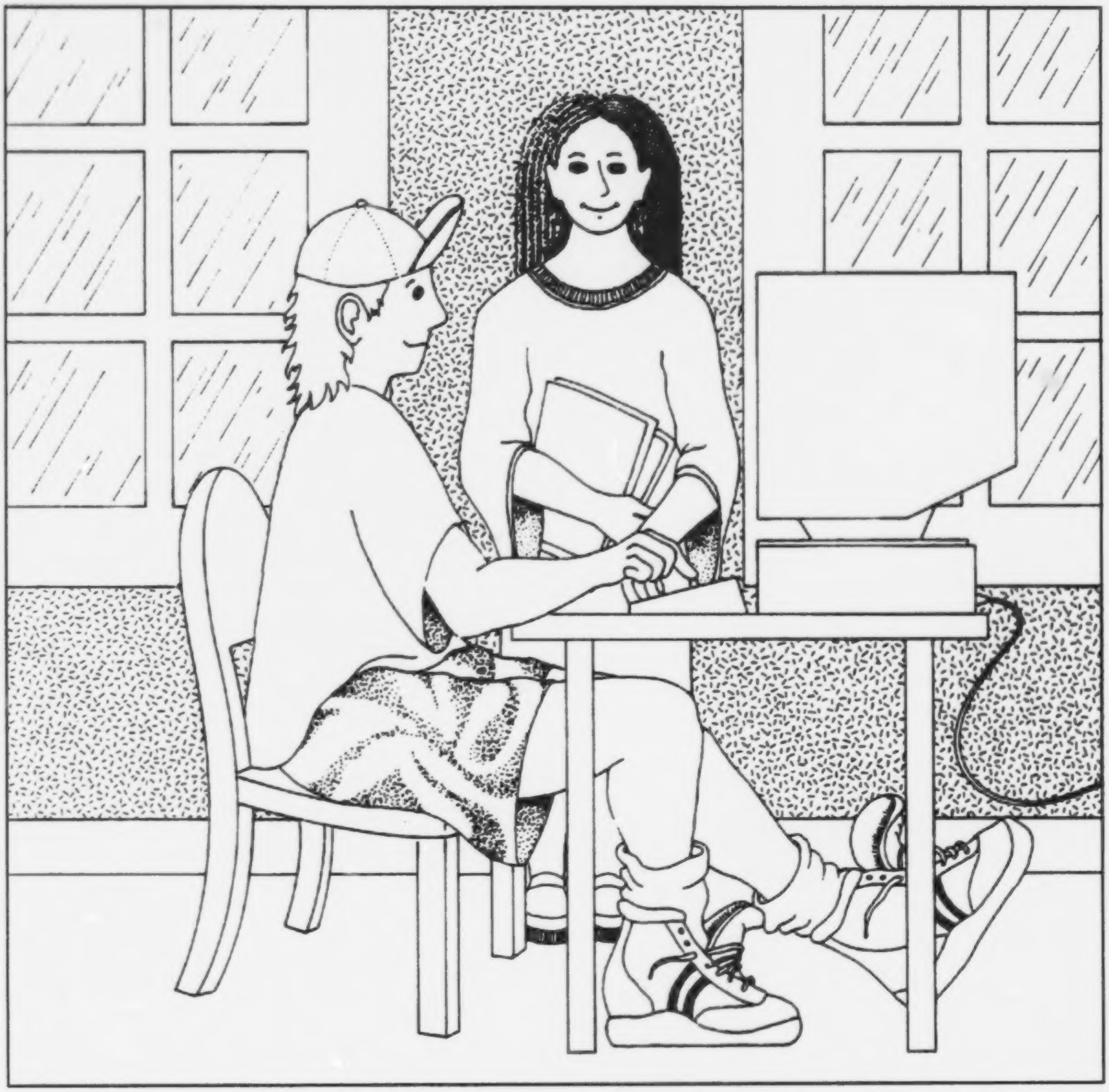

BY KEITH WETZEL

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INTRODUCTION

"Student papers and disks get lost and mutilated."

"I can't keep track of who is working on what."

"I want my students to internalize evaluation standards."

Purpose

I wrote this book to help educators solve problems like these. It provides a way to organize and document student writing through the use of writing folders and other organizing aids. This book is for those who believe that writing and word processing strategies and skills are best taught as students do real writing for a variety of readers. It includes mini-lessons to introduce writing, word processing, and recordkeeping procedures.

Writing Folders

At the core is the use of writing folders. Educators and students use folders to organize student writing and to document student progress in writing and word processing. On an inside cover of the folder is a place for students to record new writing skills/strategies learned. A one-page insert provides a place to record word processing skills/strategies learned. The folder is also the physical location for writing-in-progress (prewriting notes and drafts) on disk and paper. You may create your own folder or use the pre-designed folders available from ISTE. References to the ISTE folder (see folder in Appendix B) will be made throughout this book.

Each folder cover outlines some aspect of the writing process and is discussed in a section of the book.

For This Cover—See This Section:

Outside front	Chapter 1
Inside front (My ideas to write about)	Chapter 2
Inside back (What ______ knows about writing)	Chapter 3 &4
Outside back (My pieces of writing)	Chapter 2–4
Inside flaps (Proofreading Marks)	Chapter 4

Recording Student Work

This book explains how folder covers are used to document:

- Writing skills and strategies
- Word processing skills and strategies
- Student topics for future writing
- Genre of writing used
- Each draft of a piece of writing by title and date
- Physical copy (disk or paper) of the writing by title and date

When students fill in the spaces on the folder covers, you may provide additional recordkeeping spaces by photocopying the cover lists. To make the cover lists easy to copy and adapt, templates for each are provided in Appendix A.

Grade Levels

The mini-lessons, teaching aids, and folder cover lists are for grades 3-6 (ages 8-12). The mini-lessons in this book are to be interspersed within your existing writing program. They do not represent a complete writing program.

The Evaluation of Student Writing

Writing evaluation is becoming a national focus of attention. The procedures in this book as well as the articles on portfolio evaluation provide an introduction to the evaluation of student writing.

Test scores have a place in the evaluation of writing programs, but they often provide little help for educators and students about changes to make the day following the numerical reports. Students' writing folders provide more helpful information to educators, parents, and students.

The key to writing evaluation is the student. Arthur Costa, 1989, states: "We must constantly remind ourselves that the ultimate aim of evaluation is to enable students to evaluate themselves." Students save copies of each writing, compare them, reflect on and become aware of changes that have occurred. The lists of skills/strategies mastered provide added visible evidence of learning.

Portfolio Evaluation

Although students do the writing and reflection on their work, portfolio evaluation includes an added dimension of providing valuable information for school boards, administrators, and teachers. In portfolio evaluation, real pieces of student writing with all prewriting notes, drafts, final copy, and a cover sheet written by the student stating what was learned, are holistically or analytically scored. An analysis of this numerical data allow school boards and administrators to judge the effectiveness of their district-wide language arts program. The advantage of portfolio assessment over standardized test scores or the scoring of timed writings on assigned topics is that the portfolio assessment procedure more closely resembles real writing tasks. To provide an overview of important developments in evaluation, Chapter 6 includes articles written by four educators at the forefront of portfolio development programs.

Chapters at a Glance

Chapter 1: Writing, Computers, and Folders reviews the writing process, introduction of keyboarding and word processing, folder management, and weeks 1-8 of a writing with computers program.

Chapters 2-5 are organized by process writing stages. The cover of this book and the student's writing folder illustrates these stages:

- Prewriting
- Writing
- Revising
- Editing
- Publishing

Each chapter begins with an introduction to a stage of process writing and is followed by mini-lessons to help teachers introduce some aspect of writing, word processing, and the recording of progress in the folder. Special attention is given to teaching and modeling of revision. Overhead transparency templates that are included with the mini-lessons make it easy to present procedures and guidelines to students.

All of the transparencies and writing folder lists in this binder are in the form of templates that can be copied and distributed to students and/or made into overhead transparencies. To match your unique focus and the needs of your students, you are encouraged to modify the enclosed templates and eventually create your own.

Chapter 6: Portfolio Assessment provides more information on the use of portfolios for writing evaluation. Connections between writing folders and assessment are emphasized.

References

Costa, A.L. (April, 1989) Re-assessing Assessment. *Educational Leadership.* Vol. 46, No. 7, p. 2.

CHAPTER 1 WRITING, COMPUTERS, AND FOLDERS

Writing folders are a means to an end—an aid to organize and evaluate student writing. The context for accomplishing these goals is a program grounded in process writing. In this chapter, I will introduce the writing process, the preparation of students to write with computers, and a weekly view of teacher and student activities combining writing and word processing.

Introduction to the Writing Process

Writers appear to plan, compose, and revise. It is important for students to understand that writing is a process. Writers seldom sit down and write a finished piece. Usually they spend some time thinking about the topic. They construct a plan for gathering information or discovering what they want to write. Then they get the gist of what they want to say written down. They may read it over or read it to someone else for advice, and then revise. Some writers find it best to just begin writing without careful plans. They don't know what they will write until they get it on paper. They use their first draft to get started. Then they reread, think about what they've written, and revise. Most writers revise a piece of writing more than once until it meets their satisfaction and communicates effectively.

The folder's front cover and the cover of this book depict through a series of cartoons that writers plan, write, and revise. Students need to know that they are not expected to write it perfectly the first time. In fact, students who do that often have more problems than those who understand that writing is a process. We make best use of our memories, if we focus on plans and ideas first, then write, and revise after we get some ideas down. I have included publishing in the cover drawing because publishing helps us think about the audience as we plan. Seeing their work in print—as a single piece of part of a larger class book—is very motivating for students.

The folder's front cover refers to prewriting as planning. I have split revising and editing into two steps. Revising precedes editing. Revising focuses on content. Editing focuses on English conventions such as spelling and grammar. This distinction will be explained in the chapters on revising and editing. A brief explanation of each process follows.

Prewriting is the thinking that we do before we write. Sometimes prewriting is overlooked or an inadequate amount of time is devoted to prewriting. As a result, students "can't think of anything" to write about. Students need to see models of procedures they can follow to generate good topics for writing and to gather ideas for writing. A class discussion followed by a semantic map is one example of a prewriting activity. Prewriting pays off in better writing.

Composing is the actual writing of words. It may follow student oral rehearsal, for example, telling the story to another student before writing it or while writing it.

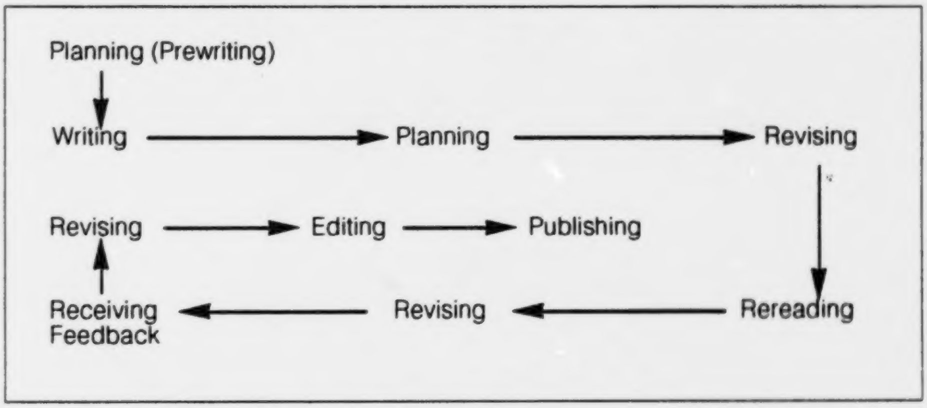
Revising is taking action to develop and improve the expression of our ideas. Authors improve their ideas by making them clearer, adding ideas that were left out, and focusing on one main idea. To help us do this, members of the classroom "writing community" share writing with others. The other person tells us what they liked, what made sense, and what didn't. The discussion will lead to ideas the author may wish to add.

Editing is the time to check for misspelling, punctuation, capitalization, and complete sentences. Proofreading is another word for editing. Revision focuses on content while editing focuses on style.

Publishing is the time that authors share their work with others. Work can be shared by reading it to the class, having it placed on a bulletin board, sending it (if it's a letter) to a pen pal or relative, or asking for it to be printed in a newspaper or book. Usually we start to think about who will read it in the early stages of writing. Writing is published after it has been revised and published.

The Order of the Process Writing Stages

Although the steps of the writing process are presented on the cover in a linear form, writers repeat steps in an order that makes personal sense. For example, after reading what they have written, students may discuss the topic with another student, get new ideas, and start again. That initial composing and discussion act as prewriting for what is to come. The processes may look like this:



The process of writing does not follow a script. Revision may be triggered by a number of different experiences and for different reasons. Reasons for revising and ideas to model revision will be discussed in the revision subsection.

Modeling the Writing Process

As I introduce the processes of writing, I find it most helpful to explain them briefly and then model the processes for students as they watch. In the mini lesson that follows you model your thinking as you write for your students and explain why authors focus on one process at a time.

Preparing to Write with Computers

Keyboarding and word processor operation are two areas that I address before students write with computers. Generally, I teach skills and strategies as students use them in their writing. However, I have found that the preteaching of keyboarding skills and word processor operations allowed students to concentrate on their writing with fewer low-level interruptions, for example, a search for the "q" key, or the key strokes to begin a new paragraph. After skills and procedures are introduced and students know where to look for directions if the steps are forgotten, I introduce added word processor features during on-going writing lessons.

Keyboarding

During the first year that students use a word processor, I recommend two weeks of keyboarding just prior to their writing with computers. If your writing-with-computers program started in grade 3, a student would receive two weeks of keyboarding in grade 3, and a week each in grades 4-6. My goal is for students to keyboard as accurately and quickly as they write with a pencil. Students will forget some of their keyboarding skill over the summer, consequently, a week of concentrated practice is needed each subsequent year. Also, as students get older, their handwriting becomes quicker and more automatic, and their keyboarding must do so too. Students should not be less fluent with the keyboard than with a pencil. If they are as fluent during the composing stage, the ease of re-writing during the revising and editing stage become very evident.

Keyboarding is best taught by a combination of teacher-directed lessons and software that guides practice. Elementary teachers introduce the keys to be practiced and the proper form before students practice. The best programs are those that reflect principles of typing instruction regarding form and order of keys introduced. Emphasis is on proper form (e.g., placement of hands and feet) and accuracy rather than speed. Increased fluency is a result of practice with attention to form and accuracy.

There are alternatives to extensive keyboarding. For example, if computers are in short supply in your school, the goal may be: Students will become familiar with the keyboard by using a keyboarding program for two days. Perhaps parent typists enter the first drafts that students wrote earlier in pencil (letter for letter, no corrections). Students revise by writing on the printed copies, and then use the computer to enter revisions.

Teaching Word Processing

Some keyboarding software includes a word processor. One program contains a teacher's guide and drill lines placed on a word processor data disk. In these programs, word processor concepts may be taught as students learn keyboarding skills.

I devote about a week to word processor skills. The following skills are taught to get students started:

Day One	Disk initialization, opening a new file, use of the Shift key, Delete key, and arrow keys to control cursor movement.
Day Two	Scrolling, cursor movement for insertion and deletion of text.
Day Three	Naming a file, saving a file, clearing the screen, and clarifying the end of line screen wrap without using the Return key.
Day Four	Opening a previously saved file, practicing inserting and deleting text embedded in a paragraph, and review of file saving and screen clearing procedures.

Word Processing Procedures

Losing text on the screen or files is frustrating. I stress procedures for naming and saving files that prevent loss if faithfully followed (a crisis may be the best reminder). My directions to students follow.

■ Naming a file

1. Save a piece of writing using a word that reminds you of your topic. For example, if you are writing about your uncle, name it "UNCLE1."

2. After you have revised UNCLE1, save the new draft to UNCLE2. If you revise it again, save it to UNCLE3.

OR

3. Another way to save it is to type the date after the title. for example, BEAR JAN 15. (Warning: some word processors do not allow spaces between words in the file name.)

Although saving a file was discussed under naming a file, teachers often stress saving text while writing. My directions to students follow:

■ Saving

1. You don't want to lose what you have written. Save it every 15 minutes to the same title. (Hint: Set a timer to ring at 15-minute intervals the first day or two as a reminder.)

2. Save before you leave the computer to do something such as get a dictionary.

Single, Double, or Triple Spacing

When text is entered during composing, single space the text and use a small readable font. This allows the writer to see as much text as possible. The author doesn't need to scroll back and forth as much to review what was written. If students are to revise a draft, it is often helpful to use a printed copy. Students will want to write changes between the lines and next to the position of the change. Students should double or triple space just before printing. I explain:

■ Printing

1. Double or triple space all rough drafts (sloppy copy). This will allow room for written comments later.
2. Single or double space the final draft (neat sheet) according to your teacher's direction.
3. Tear the perforated edges of each page.
4. If your paper is more than one page, staple the pages together.

Computer Arrangement Options

How should computers be arranged? There is no single best solution. Facilities often limit the possible arrangement. I have provided three arrangement models that are shown on the next page.

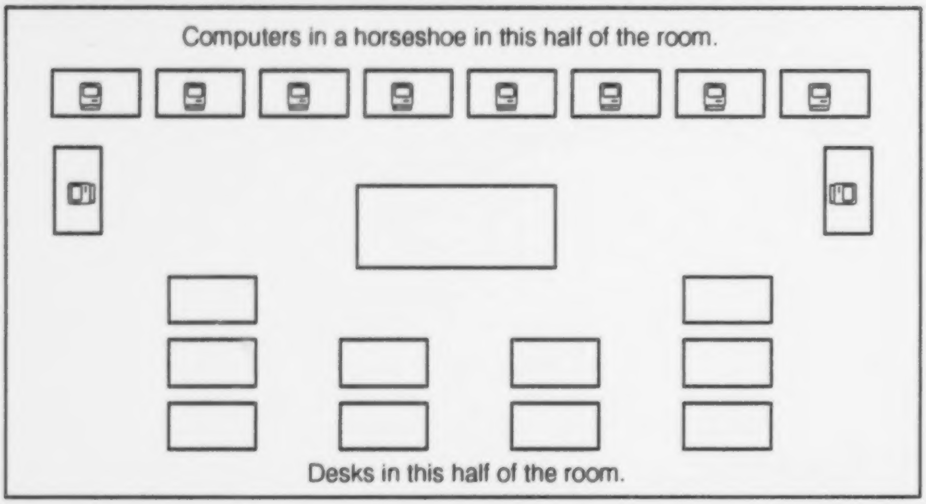
Managing Boxes and Folders

Writing folders need to be housed when students aren't using them. Dividing student writing folders among three boxes and strategically placing them around the classroom can minimize the amount of time students stand in lines to get and put away their folders. (See Appendix B for box diagram and ordering information for folders and boxes.) One group of students (perhaps those sitting near the windows) appends a red sticker to the top binding of their folders. The red sticker folders are placed in the red sticker box. Groups two (yellow) and three (blue) do the same. Place the boxes in different parts of the room so students can access them without massing in tight traffic. Alternately, some teachers ask students to hand out the folders. They find that three students hand out folders more efficiently than one student using one big box. We recommend that students do not keep the folders in their desks. The folders can tear, and disks are more likely to receive treatment that causes them to crash.

COMPUTER ARRANGEMENT DIAGRAMS

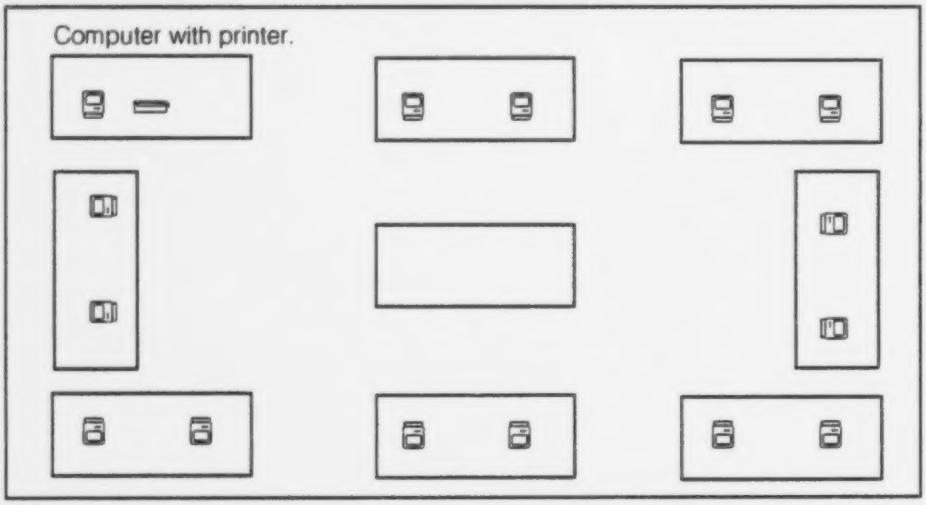
Room 1
Ten Computers and Ten Desks

An entire class goes to a multi-purpose room with 10 computers and 10 desks. Half of the class works individually at computers while the other half works at their desks. Students at their desks can be writing in a journal as a prewriting task before they get their turn to write at a computer. This assumes that you have an hour period scheduled in the lab.


Computers in a horseshoe in this half of the room.
Desks in this half of the room.

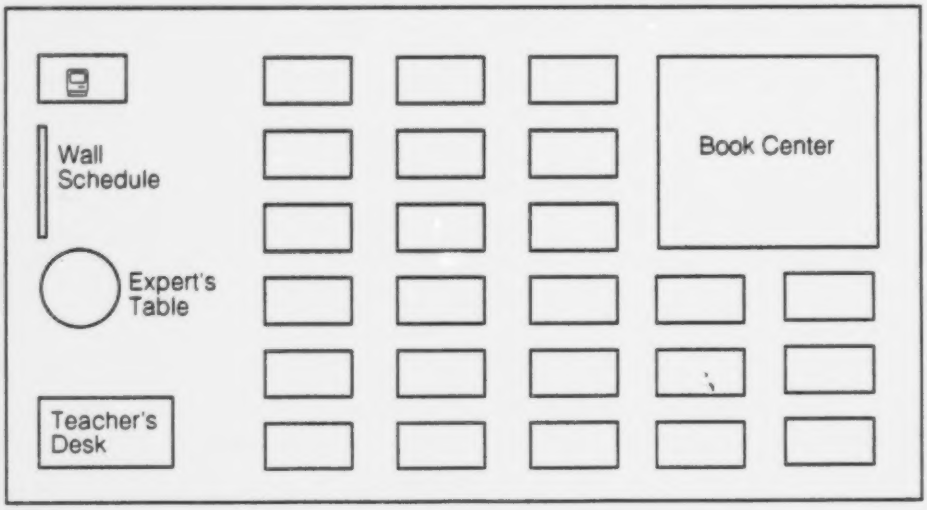
Room 2
Computer Lab

All students are working at the computer at the same time. The table in the middle allows students to have a conference away from the computer or to consult reference books. It may also hold the computer with the printer used only by students ready to print.


Computer with printer.

Room 3
One Computer Classroom

Two students work at the computer together, taking turns typing. While one types the other helps with words and ideas. A student computer expert sits near the computer center. When the students at the computer have a problem they consult the expert first. The teacher conducts class while students rotate through the writing area every 20 minutes. Students clear the screen when they are finished but do not turn the computer off. Printing is done later.


Wall Schedule
Expert's Table
Teacher's Desk
Book Center

COMBINING THE TEACHING OF WRITING AND WORD PROCESSING

The weekly overview that follows is a preview of the chapters to come and the mini-lessons that accompany them. We (four other elementary teachers in one building) introduced writing and word processing to our students according to this outline. Often we modeled the procedure and wrote with our students. Reminders about word processing procedures introduced earlier were sprinkled throughout later writing lessons.

Schedule for Weeks 1-8

TEACHER WILL	STUDENT WILL	LESSON OR FOLDER REFERENCE
Week One		
■ List topics for personal writing using "I remember when ... " theme.	■ List topics for person writing using "I remember when ...." theme.	Lesson 2
■ Write daily along with children on new pieces.	■ Begin a new piece of writing or add to a piece of writing daily.	Lesson 3
■ Use overhead with new writing to model a proper conference technique.	■ Participate in group conferencing activities.	Lesson 6, 7
■ Collect and read one piece of writing from each child.	■ Save each new draft of a piece of writing to a new name.	Lesson 3
■ Review word processing commands: SAVE, RETRIEVE(OPEN).	■ Keep each draft of a piece in your writing folder (hand written or printer copy).	Lesson 3
■ Prepare writing folders for students.		
Week Two		
■ Write uninterrupted as a model for students.	■ Add items to the "I remember when ...." list.	
■ Begin writing in a journal.	■ Begin writing in a personal journal.	
■ Ask volunteers to allow their pieces of writing to be placed on overhead, model the conference procedure: reading, receiving, questionning.	■ Do new composing or adding to writing already begun.	
■ Review word processing RETURN key.	■ If some students did not get the chance to print, they must indicate on folder cover the title to be printed.	Lesson 3
Week Three		
■ Model a conference, sit with a student in front of class, ask student to read her piece, then provide positive feedback and ask questions.	■ Write daily in journal.	
■ Begin conferencing with students as they work alone at the computer. These conferences can be as short as a minute.	■ Begin writing on new topic.	
■ Ask students to title their work. Review word processing command CENTER.	■ Revise based on conference with teacher.	Lesson 8
Week Four		
■ Give students a list of conference questions.	■ Participate in a peer conference: ■ choose a favorite piece, ■ give positive feedback, ■ follow question list as needed, and ■ answer questions and make appropriate changes to produce a second draft.	Lesson 6
■ Arrange for students to work in pairs and conference with each other.	■ Compose a new piece.	
■ Examine second drafts of writing to access any particular student needs.		

TEACHER WILL	STUDENT WILL	LESSON OR FOLDER REFERENCE
Week Five ■ Place a piece of writing on an overhead and draw arrows to places where insertions occur and cross out deletions. ■ Read a draft of a personal writing on computer screen. As students ask questions, move cursor to the location in the text where changes will be made, insert key phrases that will remind you of the change to be made.	■ List title to be printed. ■ Repeat peer conference. ■ Use arrows to leave notes to guide your revision.	Lesson 6, 7
Week Six ■ Demonstrate the piece revised based on the student conference. ■ Emphasize the additional details, clear description, more complete writing. ■ Explain "fluency" in writing. ■ Constrast the first and second drafts of a student's writing to illustrate the above concepts.	■ Revise to add detail, description, and completeness. ■ Use questions in peer conference to orally rehearse and develop fluency in writing. ■ List titles for printing.	Lesson 8
Week Seven ■ Explain the "author's chair." ■ Ask students to list the piece(s) they would like to publish. ■ Distribute language convention checklist.	■ Revise piece that will be published. ■ Use checklist to identify items to be edited. ■ Arrange conference with teacher to review checklist.	Lesson 11
Week Eight ■ Review student writings with checklist of editing conventions. ■ Place on bulletin board a series of student drafts on a topic. Discuss the development of the piece. ■ As students complete a piece of writing for publi-	■ Edit the piece that will be published. ■ Illustrate final drafts and prepare covers. ■ Read final draft in "author's chair."	Lesson 10

MINI-LESSON 1

EXPLAINING THE WRITING PROCESS

Objectives

Students will understand that they do not need to write a perfect story, report, or letter the first time they put down their words. They will demonstrate this by writing a sentence about the writing process.

Materials Needed

To model writing, use a computer with an overhead projector and LCD (liquid crystal display) unit or a large screen monitor.

Time Needed

20-30 minutes

Opening

"Think about the last time you wrote something. In your mind think of two or three things that you had to think about as you wrote." Provide 30 seconds to think. "Now let's share some answers."

Students share answers and teacher creates a list on the overhead or monitor that might include:

- Spelling
- Capitals
- Sentences
- Punctuation
- What to write about
- How to start
- What to write next
- How to finish
- How to make it interesting

"How many things do you need to think about as you write?"

"Well, that is more than we can keep in mind at one time."

"How can we solve this problem?"
We are going to solve this problem the way authors solve the problem.

Today you are going to learn that these are problems for everyone and real authors solve them by working on one at a time.

"Authors cannot do everything well at once. So they focus on different parts at different times. Authors focus on their ideas and their goals first. They begin by gathering ideas, and writing them down without worrying about spelling, selecting the best word, or punctuating correctly. Later they go back and focus on the things that need to be made right. "

Information/Modeling

"I recently received some flowers (or any other gift) from a friend for my birthday and I need to write a thank you note. How many of you have had to do that? I'm going to write it right now while you watch, and as I write it, I will show you how *I work on one problem at a time*."

(Prewriting) "First I have to think about what to say. That's called *prewriting*. Let's see. What did I like about the flowers? I'm going to make notes on the overhead as I think. They were pretty colors—pink and white. They smelled great. They were in a basket that matched my tablecloth. There were some pink rosebuds that always remind me of a place I lived once. "

"What's this stage called? That's right—prewriting. I haven't really done any writing, but I do have ideas. "

(Writing) "Now I'm going to write. Notice I don't have to think about what to write about—I already have a list." (Compose a brief thank you letter on the overhead using the ideas that you have jotted down. Don't try to be perfect—remember you want to model revising and editing!) "This is a rough draft. This stage is called *writing*. Notice that I went pretty quickly. I just wanted to write down my ideas."

"What do we call this stage? Did I worry about capitals and periods? No—I just wrote."

(Revising) "Now I am ready for the third stage. This is revising. I reread my work, and I might ask someone else to read it and give me some help. Let's read what I did. Does this sound like me? Does it sound like they will understand it?" Reread and make a few revisions with the class watching. (Sentence combining or adding more descriptive words are usually easy revisions to model.)

"What do we call this? Revising. Notice I didn't have to write anything really new and I didn't have to think of ideas, and I'm not thinking about spelling."

(Editing) "Now I like the way it sounds and I want to make sure it has correct punctuation and capitalization. Let's read through and check that. Looks good. This is called *editing*."

(Publishing) "Finally I am ready to publish. I copy the note over on a thank you card that I bought and mail it. I won't do that right now, but here's the card, and I'll do it at home tonight. What is this stage called? Do I have to think about what to write? Or spelling? No, I just have to concentrate on neatness and handwriting."

Let's list the steps

1. Prewriting	Thought of ideas
2. Writing	Wrote sentences
3. Revising	Changed words and sentence to make meaning
4. Editing	Looked for capitals, spelling, etc.
5. Publishing	Re-wrote in final form and sent to my friend

Closing

"Today you watched while I wrote like an author. Think in your mind: Did I do everything at once, or did I do one thing and then another until I was done? Now, write on a piece of pap[illegible] sentence about how I did it—everything at once or one step at a time?"

How often have you heard students say:

"I don't know what to write about."

Or if we provide a topic:

"I don't know anything to write about that?"

Prewriting, How Do We Get Started?

Individuals differ in their writing styles. Some writers tend to just begin writing. They rewrite a lot, and polish extensively. Another group tends to plan and think in advance. Once they have written, these planning types revise infrequently. For others the type of writing influences how much they plan or if they decide to just start writing.

Free writing is an activity that writers in the first group find helpful. Often it is a warm up activity. Essentially, students are to write what ever comes to mind. They are not to stop and consider correct spelling or grammatical construction. Portions of the text produced in this fashion may be used in a first draft of a subsequent piece of writing or it may become the first draft.

We need to recognize that students will use different styles when they write; those that are planners should be given plenty of time to plan and should be encouraged to use that strategy; those who begin by drafting should be encouraged to just begin and plenty of time should be allowed for revision.

A regular writing schedule helps students plan. Teachers report that students who know that they will be writing Monday-Thursday 9:00-9:50, begin to think about the topic they wish to write on and what they might want to write before they come to class. Students explain that they plan before they sleep, as they walk to school, and talk to friends.

Planning can be more formal. Once I decided to write a letter to my state representative. As I prepared to write this letter, I made a list of things I wanted to address: the inaccurate assertions of the proponents of the spending cuts, a better way to accomplish the same purpose, a contrasting view of the will of the electorate. My goal was not merely to criticize the proposal, but to provide a better method of solving the problem.

Writers can have procedural and content plans. Procedures frame how to accomplish the goal; content deals with the information in the text. Darlene Head, a fourth grade teacher taught her students the following procedures for writing reports:

- Choose a topic you are interested in and would like to know more about.
- List what you know already, then what you'd like to know more about.
- Start collecting information by interviewing an expert in the field.
- Write out the interview questions you want to ask ahead of time.
- Decide whether to call, write, or interview in person.
- After the interview, discuss what you have found with another person.
- Decide if you need more information, determine the type of library books that will help.

Templates and Planning

Many types of writing have an internal structure, for example, friendly and business letters, news stories, evaluations (movie or restaurant reviews). A structure for a review can be a series of questions that guide the writing. A set of questions makes the framework explicit and allows students to focus on the content rather than figuring out both the structure and the content. These topic headings or questions can be placed on a data disk as a writing template or prompted writing activity. Students begin by inserting text between them. The questions and the discussion about them is the prewriting phase.

For example, the framework for a restaurant review may include:

What is the name of the restaurant?
What type of food does it serve? Describe it.
What is the atmosphere like? How do you dress when you go?
How long do you have to wait to be served? Was this OK?
Were you treated in a friendly manner?
How good was the food?
Would you recommend this restaurant to others? Why?

Writers need less time to plan when they understand the structure prior to writing. It is a good use of time to develop procedures for helping student understand the structure of various types of writing. For example, you could read restaurant reviews from a local newspaper to your students, and then record the questions students found that the articles answered. Students could also suggest the best order for the questions. These questions can be placed on a data disk for students or students can enter the questions themselves.

Children's literature can provide models for the structure of different types of writing. When students read fables, you can make the structure of the fable (story grammar) explicit. Structural elements of fables include: two or three animals that speak and display an aspect of human nature; one animal who represents the physically stronger or faster and who tries to take advantage of the weaker or slower animal; a weaker or slower animal who thinks quicker, is more diligent, or is superior in some other way; the problem, challenge, or crises that falls upon the physically weaker. Here is a template for a fable.

1. Create animals that will speak.
2. Make one animal physically superior.
3. Make one animal physically weaker, but with strength of character.
4. Describe the challenge that these animals will face.
5. Select the attribute that the weaker animal will use to escape or win.
6. State the lesson that the fable teaches.

Use or adapt this template and write a fable as a class using a word processor and large monitor. Encourage students to use that structure as they write their own fable or adapt the class fable. Students can start writing by inserting information between questions or headings.

Scaffolding

A scaffold is a temporary support structure that is needed as a building goes up. Once the building is completed, the outside support structure is no longer need. The building stands on its own. The teacher presents a procedures, models it, and provides activities that allow students to practice. Eventually students initiate these procedures on their own without teacher modeling and prompting. In one case discussed above, I have presented free writing as a procedure for discovering what one knows about a topic and writing down the gist without regard to the form (spelling, sentences, word choice). This is one way to proceed, one plan. Students who find this helpful are encouraged to follow this strategy when they prepare to write. A strategy—such as the prewriting steps—that required teacher support initially, students can use on their own. In another case, the plan required that students recognize the internal structure of the genre. Children's literature read by students provided the model to be studied. The story grammar was the structure. The teacher led discussions to make explicit the structure of the fairy tale. They wrote a fairy tale together as a class using that structure, and then students wrote their own fairy tales. Eventually students generated the structure and the tale on their own.

Topic Selection

Let's go back to that student question: "I don't know what to write about?" I begin by asking students to write in the personal narrative genre. I start with this genre of writing because I want students to write from a vein of deep personal knowledge. I provide rules for selecting topics and model how I generate topics. Students learn a procedure for selecting topics as they generate topics. Finding good topics is an issue that will arise often. I explain during a minilesson that choosing topics is important. And you always want to keep a bank of ideas that you can add to, use, and reuse.

Often I reuse good topics, that is, I write on a powerful topic more than once. My grandmother is a topic I write about often. One of my writings is about a go-cart engine she gave me when I was 10 years old. Another story was about our car ride to her farm when I was seven. Recently, I wrote a poem about my visit to her in a nursing home.

I begin by using a modified form of free writing. However, before they free write I want students to generate some ideas. A series of mini-lessons can be presented that teach students procedures for activating their prior knowledge. A mini-lesson can be both a model for how to proceed and a writitng activity. My goal is for students to learn to choose their own topics and to independently think about their ideas before writing. Mini-lesson 3 is a guided method of thinking before writing. I present this procedure and later suggest that students use this procedure on their own to help them refresh ideas on the topic. Prewriting pays off. It is time well-spent. The clearer the picture students have of their topic, and how to proceed, the clearer the written product. Mini-lesson 2 helps students select topics and check to see if they are appropriate topics. Mini-lesson 3 shows students where to record those topics on their folder cover and to add to them. Mini-lesson 4 encourages students to draw on information based on recalling what they saw, heard, and smelled during an event before they free write. Mini-lesson 5 guides students as they generate the structure for a restaurant review.

Modeling the Composing Stage

I model writing for several reasons. It is difficult to see how expert writers write and solve problems. I model composing by writing as the students watch and listen. Students need to see the way expert writers compose (yes, you are an expert writer compared to your students). Talk aloud as you write and think. Allow students to see the problems you encounter and how you solve them. You may write on an overhead transparency, the board, or computer with large monitor.

Another reason is to provide an example of teachers who write. Many schools have Sustained Silent Reading Programs, where students and faculty read for 20 minutes each day. The lessons plan below suggests that for this lesson you write with your students. Teachers may not want to do this each day. In fact, while students write is an excellent time to do short conferences with your students (see Chapter 3: Revising for further explanation). Although it isn't possible to write with your students each day, take the opportunity explained in Mini-lesson 3 to write with your students.

To further explore prewriting and writing you may refer to these resources:

Calkins, Lucy Mc Cormick & Harwayne, Shelley (1991). Chapters 1-5. *Living*

Between the Lines. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

Graves, Donald (1983). Chapter 3: Help Children Choose Topics. *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

Atwell, Nancie (1987). Chapter 10: Learning to Write from Other Writers. *In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

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MINI-LESSON 2

CREATING A LIST OF TOPICS AND RECORDING THEM ON THE FOLDER

Objectives

Students will understand how to generate, select, and record topics for writing. They will demonstrate their knowledge by writing 3-5 of their own topics on the inside cover of their folders.

Materials Needed

Computer with LCD projection unit or large screen monitor
Copy of the writing folder

Time Needed

30 minutes

Procedure

The students will be writing in the personal narrative genre of writing. Discuss the rules for topic selection with them. Then model the construction of your list as the students observe. When you have 5-10 possible writing topics on your list (see next heading), go back and examine them to see if they meet the rules. Discuss them aloud. Cross off the list those topics that do not meet the guidelines.

Opening

"I am going to list several topics that I could write about. Here are the rules for topic selection (Post them in the room):

- Topics must be true (something that really happened).
- You must know a lot about the topic.
- You have some feelings about the story.
- It should be something you are willing to share with others.

"Here are some topics I could write about." (Discuss them as you write, although you are writing only a title, discuss the topic and point out that it meets the above criteria. If it doesn't meet the criteria, draw a line through it.):

Write your list here	*My examples*
I remember when:	I remember when:
____________________	I went on a picnic last week.
____________________	My bike tire went flat away from home.
____________________	I visited my grandparents.
____________________	I forgot my part in a school play.
____________________	I became lost in the woods.
____________________	My gerbils fought.
____________________	We moved into a new house.
____________________	My dog was hit by a car.

Discussion

Give students enough time to place 3-5 topics on their list. If a student is unable to think of any topics you may confer with the student about things that he or she thinks are important.

Explain to the students: "Turn to the front inside cover of your folder. The inside front cover is a place to record your ideas to write about. Now it is your turn to place some topics on your list."

Allow about 15 minutes for writing.

Follow Up Suggestions

Here are three follow-up activities that I use to help students think about new topics.

1. Students' Share Topics
   Often when students hear about another student's topics, they will discover related topics that they can use. I suggest that you make a list on the board or on butcher paper of topics students are writing about each week. Eventually, students can take over this job. You might provide the butcher paper, have students write their own topics on it, and hang it on a wall.

2. Add to the List
   Students are to add to the bank of ideas, use, and reuse them. Once a week give students a few minutes to add new topics to their list. Let them know that they can add to their list whenever they think of another topic. The strategy discussed below extends this idea.

3. Teach Author Strategies
   Keep your eyes open for strategies that you can share with students who are stuck. Authors of children's literature often talk about the source of ideas for their books. Make a note of real life examples and use them with students. This is effective particularly if the student has read a book by the author. For example, if a student worries about running out of ideas for writing you might use the story from Tomie de Paola who said when asked, "Of course I do....But I have a trick. I always try to come up with new projects before I finish the one I'm working on....Sort of like sourdough bread: you take a little dough to start your new batch." (From "Stories from Authors' Lives by Lucy Calkins and Shelley Harwayne(1987) in *The Writing Workshop: A World of Difference*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, p. 134.)

MINI-LESSON 3

NAMING AND SAVING FILES

Objectives

Students will understand how to name and save their writing to disk. They will demonstrate their knowledge by entering the topics they generated in Mini-lesson 2 in a new file, naming, and saving the file.

Previous Skills Needed

Students need to have initialized a disk. They need to know how to turn on the computer, start the word processor, open a file, insert text, use the return key, move the cursor, and use the delete or backspace key. Today's lesson begins after students have turned on the computer, booted the word processors, placed their disks in the drives, and opened a new file.

Materials Needed

Students will need the disks they initialized earlier and their folders.

Time Needed

15 minutes

Opening

"Have you ever lost something that you wanted and you never were able to find it again? You know that we can write using a computer. We see the words as they appear on the screen. Where do you think the words go if we turn off the computer? They will be lost forever unless we direct the word processor to save them to our disks. After we save them we can also print them on paper. Today you will be learning the steps needed to save what you enter through the keyboard to your disk. You will be entering the topics on your "I remember when list" from your folder. Then you will name the file and save it.

The Directions

"Open a new file. Enter the topics from your *I remember when* list."

Allow enough time so everyone can entered several topics. Students will save the file, close the file, open it, add new topics, and save again.

"Now we will name the file and save what we have entered so far. A good name for a file is one that is short and yet it reminds you of its contents. You will save your file to: MyTopics(Student Initials), e.g., MyTopicsKW."

Explain the rules for file naming that are unique to your word processor. For example some word processors allow spaces between words in the title or other characters, others do not. Some allow periods in the title others do not. Others have a maximum number of characters that can be used in a title.

Explain the steps for saving. *Microsoft Works* for the *Macintosh* is my illustrative example. Use the steps appropriate to your word processor.

1. Select **Save** from the **File** menu.
2. After the **Save dialog box** appears, enter the title.
3. Click the **Save** button.

Now check to see if it is on your disk.

1. Select **Open** from the **File** menu.
2. Check to see if the name of the software or the name of your disk appears on the screen. (Show students the place that the disk title appears.)
3. If the software disk title appears, click the **Drive** button to switch to your disk. .
4. If your personal disk appears, you should see "MyTopics (Initials)" in the larger box below it.
5. Click the **Cancel** button.
6. If your file was not saved onto the correct disk, follow the save procedure again. If your file was saved, you may enter the remaining topics on your list or add new ones.

When you finished entering your topics what will you need to do again?"

Receive answers.

"Yes, you need to save it again. Every time you add to your list, you will need to save it again. It is a good idea to save every 15 minutes and before you leave your computer."

Explain Saving Again to the Same Title

"When finished, save your work again by selecting **Save** from the **File** menu. This time it updates or saves over your earlier work without presenting a dialog box. Once you have saved your story, you can add to it, and save it by simply selecting **Save**."

MINI-LESSON 4
RECORDING WORD PROCESSING SKILLS ON THE FOLDER

Objective

Students will understand when and where they are to record word processing skills and strategies they are learning. After the teacher has explained the skill, students will write the skill/strategy on the insert titled *What* ____________ *knows about word processing.* The word processing strategy that will be recorded is that students will save their work every 15 minutes.

Time Needed

10-15 minutes

Materials Needed

For each student, make a copy of the folder template titled: *What* ____________ *knows about word processing.*

Make a transparency of this template to explain and model the recording of a new skill. (Two templates follow this lesson. The teacher's version has a skills and strategies key at the bottom of the form. The version without the key is for students.)

Discussion

This mini-lesson should be followed by a time in which students will practice saving the new text they produce at the keyboard.

Students best learn skills and strategies at the time they need to use them in their writing. Word processing strategies need to be explained just like you explain other writing strategies. I interviewed a class of fourth graders who used a word processor for one-half of the school year. As part of the interview, students were asked to demonstrate a move of text. I said "Use the word processor to move a paragraph from the end of a piece of writing to the beginning." Few students could accomplish this. I recommend that you teach students how to accomplish each word processing skill. It would be nice if students would recall the steps needed after they were explained once. Students will forget and you will need to reteach as the situation arises. To accomplish multi-step procedures, teachers have found that a script posted by the machine is a helpful reference for students.

Opening

"Do you remember our discussions about what you learned in school at the end of each day? Just before you go home we make a list. This provides a nice summary of our accomplishments. Sometimes is it difficult to think of everything that we learned. If we kept a list during the day, it would be so much easier to remember them at the end of the day. You will be learning many new word processing skills. To help remember them and provide a summary of what you learned, you will write each skill on the sheet I will hand out. This sheet is to be kept in the pocket of your folder."

Distribute copies of "What ____________ knows about word processing."

"Each time we cover a new skill you can write it on the next line. After the skill, you can write the correct date. Look at my example:"

Place the transparency of the template on the overhead projector.

"In Mini-lesson 3 you learned how to save a file to a name that reminded you of the ideas in the piece of writing. As you write on the word processor today, you will save your work every 15 minutes. Occasionally, the computer memory is wiped out (for example, when the electrical power is interrupted). We are being careful by saving to a disk so nothing will be lost. Today I will give you the save signal (the timer will ding) every 15 minutes. In the future you will be saving on your own. "This is the place to record the new word processing skills you know how to use. Write your name on the line in "What ________________ knows about word processing."

"On the line below the words "I can" write: Save my writing every 15 minutes. On the same line below the word "Date" write today's date."

"You will keep track of the major word processing skills you learn. This is an important way for you to see your progress. Keep it in the pocket of your folder."

Record this skill on the transparency as the students watch.

What ______ Knows About Word Processing

Skill: Save my writing every 15 minutes.
Date: April 24
Continue: "Each time a new skill is introduced, you can write it on your sheet. Sometimes there will be handy reference posted by the computer to remind you of the steps needed to accomplish a task."

Record Other Word Processing Skills Learned

"In an earlier mini-lesson you created a new file, titled it, and saved your writing to that title. Take out a sheet of paper and write down how you did that."

Review the steps with the class.

"Now, how could you write that strategy on the next line of the handout?"

Accept something like: *I can open a new file, title it, and save it.*

Review

"Let us review. What do you do every 15 minutes that you are writing with a computer?"

"What name do you save it to?"

"What word processing steps do you take to save?"

"How can you check to see if the name of the file is on your disk?"

"Where do you keep your "What _____ knows about word processing" sheet?

Follow-up Suggestions

I use this "list of topics" file to teach other word processing skills. Later, I'll teach the class to open this file (a previously named file) so they can add topics to their lists. Also, when I teach the block move, the students will reorder the items on their list. Each time a skill is taught, students are encouraged to add new writing topics to their list.

What ________ Knows About Word Processing

Skill	Date	Found In

Word Processing Skills and Strategies Key:

Opening Files
- ■ Locates a file by name on a disk
- ■ Opens a new file
- ■ Opens a previously saved file

Saving Files

Saves first draft to a key word in piece	EXAMPLE: New House
Saves each revision to a key word plus a number	EXAMPLE: New House 2, New House 3
Saves while writing and does not lose text	EXAMPLE: every 10 or 15 minutes
Makes a back-up copy of files	EXAMPLE: every week

What ________ Knows About Word Processing

Skill	Date	Found In

Note: This is the teacher's copy of this template. It contains suggestions about other word processing skills and strategies that students can add to the list as you teach them in the future.

MINI-LESSON 5
DOING A PREWRITING ACTIVITY AND RECORDING THE FILE NAME ON THE FOLDER

Objectives

Students will uncover their thoughts on a topic through prewriting. They will share their thoughts by writing on the topic.

Time Needed

50 minutes

Materials Needed

To model writing I use an overhead projector or a computer and projector so all students can follow along.

Opening

"Have you ever had a dream so interesting that you remembered it? During this dream you went somewhere, talked to others, and participated in something exciting. Today you be able to re-live a story in your imagination."

Ask students to select a topic from their list just as you have modeled. Lead them through mental imaging of the story about their topic. (I give students the option of closing their eyes.)

I say:

- Select one topic from your list." (Pause 10 seconds.)
- "Think about what you saw in the story." (Pause 10 seconds.)
- Notice the smells." (Pause 10 seconds.)
- Who was there? What did each say?" (Pause 10 seconds.)
- What did you hear?" (Pause 10 seconds.)
- What was the most exciting part of the story?" (Pause 10 seconds.)
- Play the story through in your head (play a video of it). (Pause 20 seconds.)

Oral Rehearsal before Writing

Also, allow students to orally rehearse their story before they write. I have found that after the guided imagery activity above, it is helpful to have the students tell their story to someone before they write. One tells for two minutes while the partner listens. Then they reverse roles. Oral rehearsal helps writers recreate the event and write fluently. Ask students to pick a partner to tell their story. Each one will have two minutes to tell his/her story. After two minutes ask the listener to become the story teller.

Writing

"Now write your story (for 15-20 minutes). I'm going to write with you on my topic so it is important that you don't interrupt me. When I'm finished I'm going to share my writing with you." If possible, compose on a computer with a large monitor or LCD device.

Otherwise use an overhead and write on a transparency. Either way students will notice that you are composing.

Recording Writing Progress

After writing today, I explain the importance of keeping track of each piece of writing. Every draft should be saved. In order to see their piece of writing develop, they need to write their name, the title of the piece, and date on each piece of writing. The next step is to note the same information on the outside back cover of their writing folder. This record is an index to each student's writing. At a glance students can see what they have been working on and their progress. On the outside back cover is a place for the title. Often after a first draft, students will not have complete titles. At this point one or two words that reflect the topic will do fine. I usually write a couple of words and follow it with a number to denote which draft. e.g., Lost Dog1. Later versions may be followed by *Lost Dog 2* or *Lost Dog Revised*. I tell the students that if they are finished with their first drafts, they should write "Yes" under ***Need to Print***. We will discuss the ***Type of Writing*** in Mini-lesson 5.

Title	*Today's Date*	*Type of Writing*	*Need to Print*	*Copy in Folder*
Lost Dog1	Aug. 15	(Skip for now)	Yes	No

Follow-up Activities

Reinforcing Recording Information

You will need to stress the importance of labeling papers and recording information on the folder cover on more than one occasion, but the first time you write with students you can explain it and show students by recording the information on your folder.

Printing Student Work

If your class is using word processors, students may wish to print a copy of their writings. At times, I do not want to use class time to print. Printing may be too noisy or it simply may be impossible for everyone to print during the period. (See heading ***Organizing Guidelines*** for additional information on saving files and printing.) It's handy to have a teacher's aid or parent to print the file later. A quick glance on the back cover can let the person doing the printing know when it is necessary.

Teaching Strategies

As students gain experiences with these two prewriting activities, you should make these strategies explicit. I debrief with students. Discuss how it went today.

"How did it go today?" Accept answers.

"Did it help to do the imagery activity and tell the story to a friend before you wrote?" Accept answers.

"You followed a plan to help you discover what you had to write about that topic before writing. Good writers have plans to help them think before they write. "

On their own, students can use imagery to recall events and tell it to someone before writing. If the students don't verbalize the imagery procedure completely, I remind them that they imagined what they saw, said, and did. Then they played a movie of it in their heads and finally they told it to someone. These are strategies that many writers find helpful. They can use them.

"Write down a sentence to help you remember the plan you followed today." Ask for a volunteer to share the plan followed today.

MINI-LESSON 6
DEVELOPING A RESTAURANT REVIEW

Objectives

Students will understand how to write a restaurant review. They will demonstrate their understanding by writing a review.

Equipment Needed

To model writing I use an overhead projector or a computer with a large monitor or projection unit.

Materials Needed

Ask students to locate restaurant reviews in the newspaper and bring them to class.
Locate restaurant reviews in local newspapers of magazines. Make transparencies of them to serve as models.

Time Needed

Introduction and writing a class review together: 60-120 minutes. Student reviews can be written over a period of 1-2 weeks.

Discussion

In this lesson students will learn to write restaurant reviews. Reviews have a structure. Students can uncover the structure by examining published reviews and thinking about the answers to questions that will help readers make decisions about selecting a restaurant. After the structure is clear, lead the class in writing a review. Select a restaurant that most of them have experienced. Arrange the questions generated earlier in order and record students answers to them. Students will gather information for a review and write a review. The class can take an active role in selecting the means of publication. I suggest that students call their local newspaper and ask the education editors if they would be interested in examining their reviews for publication.

Procedure

1. In preparation for this lesson, tell students that the class will be writing restaurant reviews over the next two weeks. They should check newspapers for reviews and bring them to class the next day. Several students could also check newspapers in the library. You might talk about the section of the newspaper that publishes reviews. Movie reviews and auto reviews may be found as well.

2. Read a review. Ask what questions the reviewer asked and answered. Make a list. Read another review and continue to develop the list. Place a transparency of a review located by one of your students on the overhead and continue to develop the list. Arrange the questions in the best order. (There may be more than one appropriate order.)

The list of questions your class develops may include some of these:

What is the name of the restaurant?

What type of food does it serve? Describe it.

What is the atmosphere like? How do you dress when you go?

How long do you have to wait to be served? Was this OK?

Were you treated in a friendly manner?

How good was the food?

Would you recommend this restaurant to others? Why?

If you are using a computer to record the class-generated questions, you may save them to a disk. Students can copy this file from your disk to theirs or they can write it down and enter it as a template. It is a good idea to leave a couple of lines between questions to make it easier for students to begin inserting text.

3. Discuss possible ways to publish the reviews. You could make a book of the review and place it in the school library. Your local paper may be interested in publishing some of the reviews. Ask for student volunteers to call the education editor of the newspaper and ask the editor if he or she would be willing to consider the student reviews for publication. Bring a phone book. Look up the numbers and discuss which editor to talk to. Discuss what the caller might include in the conversation. Role play the part. The teacher can be the news editor and the student can be the caller.

Information for the caller:

Ask to speak to______________.

Give your name, grade, and school.

State your reason for calling.

Explain how you will do the reviews.

Tell when the review will be ready.

Ask if the editor willing to read and consider them.

If so, ask what information should be send with the review? (Example: A picture of the reviewer, name and address of the person sending the reviews, etc.)

You may wish to read Chapter 8 for additional ways to publish student writing. It is appropriate and motivating to discuss the audience for the review during a prewriting activity.

4. Discuss how you would go about finding the information for a review. Students may write about a restaurant they have visited in the past. They may wish to visit a restaurant, take notes as they eat, and then write a review. Students who want to evaluate the same restaurant may work together and collaborate on a review.

5. If appropriate you might write a whole class review of the school lunch. Alternatively, you may select a restaurant where many of your students have eaten (hamburger or pizza places). You record the information as the students supply the answers. If there is disagreement, you may include different answers. Insert the information between headings or questions as you key in the text.

6. Make a list on the board or butcher paper of the restaurants that students want to review. Those who want to begin now may do so. Students who want to eat at the restaurant may gather information before writing. Allow students to work in pairs.

7. After students have a draft, you may discuss the criteria that the newspaper editor will use for judging which reviews to publish. (For more background on revising and editing, read Chapter 7 and 8.)

Criteria might include:

- Is it fair? Is it balanced? Does it include what was liked and disliked? Did anyone who ate with you agree or disagree with your comments. Have you included those comments too.
- Are the ideas clear? Will the reader understand what you meant?
- Is your conclusion strong? Does the reader know what your recommendation is?

8. A review is not submitted in a question and answer format. How can a review be changed to a more acceptable format? Re-examine published reviews to note how the authors wrote their reviews. Change the review the class wrote earlier to a narrative format.

9. Follow the revising and editing procedures suggested in the following chapters.

Teach Author Strategies for Writing

In Mini-lesson 2, I suggested that you share the strategies of authors for solving problems. If students have trouble gathering sufficient information for review you might share the story of E.B. White. While E.B. White wrote *Charlotte's Web*, he kept a spider in a match box on his desk observing the spider at work and also he spent time watching a spider in a barn. You might suggest that students keep a note pad and pencil and write their observations about the restaurant as they visit it. In this way students learn a strategy for finding and developing topics. Children learn a strategy that not only solves the present problem, but one that can be drawn on later. (The E.B. White example was taken from Calkins, Lucy & Harwayne, Shelley (1987). Stories from Authors' Lives. *The Writing Workshop: A World of Difference*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, p. 134.)

CHAPTER 3 REVISING

> "I love revisions. Where else in life can spilled milk be transformed into ice cream? We can't go back and revise our lives, but being allowed to go back and revise what we have written comes closest." (Paterson, 1981, p. 63)

How and Why Writers Revise

When friends meet over coffee, they engage in a dialogue in which each one listens and each one speaks. They construct meaning through an interactive process that includes conversation and nonverbal cues such as gestures, intonation, and a commonly understood context. Following coffee there is little doubt that they have communicated with each other.

So, too, the reader and writer engage in a dialogue, but they do so at a distance. The reader and writer attempt to construct meaning without the other present, using only the text and the imagined dialogue with the other. Readers come to the text with prior knowledge that enables them to predict what is coming, confirm their predictions, and adjust their conclusions as needed, but they also enter a conversation with an author—an author who is present only in words—and question, disagree, suggest alternatives, and appreciate or critique a literary effort. Writers do their part to provide the context so the reader will be able to make accurate predictions as well as anticipate the reader's questions, address areas of potential misunderstanding, defend one's point of view, and make reading a literary treat. When each one creates a mental dialogue with the other, a transaction occurs between the reader and writer. In this transaction, the writer and reader create meaning.

Most writers will not communicate effectively with their readers in their first draft or early drafts. The transaction they seek to create breaks down when feedback from the listener is missing. Through feedback, the writer begins to understand that something was unclear, an idea was incomplete, or a part in the sequence was missing. This feedback helps the writer move from oral to written language.

Children acquire written language in some ways that are similar to the ways they acquire oral language. As the younger child attempts new structures and words, parents, older siblings, and other adults give feedback and provide support for each closer approximation. A child gains facility with written language within a rich interactive communication environment through feedback, and oral and written language models.

Revision stems from the author's awareness of a discrepancy between what was written (what the author wanted to mean) and what the reader understood. The writer develops a writing conscience that helps the writer want to amend the redundant, incomplete, or misunderstood.

A Social Dialogue Leads to Revision

Friends engage in a dialogue over coffee. A reader and writer engage in a dialogue after the writer records his thoughts. Different kinds of feedback influence the rethinking of the author. Feedback may take the form of a friendly conversation or pointed questions. This social dialogue may include questions to highlight a problem, such as a lack of supporting detail, too many topics within a particular piece of writing, or opinions stated without evidence. Some students may be able to perceive the need for specific information without direct questions and suggestions. Other students may need guidance about the problems, e.g., how to phrase an answer and where to insert it in the body of the text.

Here is how one teacher, Randy Boone, and a fourth grader, Travis, engage in a dialogue about Travis' writing. Although he asks questions, in this example Mr. Boone is nondirective. The first draft is followed by a portion of their conversation.

> I will never forget the time I caught a 22-inch fish. Just as my dad and I were about to give up my line took off to the middle of the lake. The fish was so big that I almost fell into the lake. But my dad caught me. It took me quite a while to reel it in. As I brought it close to shore my dad used our net to catch it. My fish would of got away if my dad didn't catch it with the net. My hook was about to rip his mouth. We finally got him in to the shore and put him on the stringer. I was so proud of myself that I had caught the biggest fish in camp that year.

Randy: What kind of fish was it?
Travis: A 22-inch rainbow trout.

Randy: Oh. That's pretty big for a rainbow trout.
Travis: Yeah and there was a bunch of fish in the water just staring at our bait. We could see them there really close. We set our bait in front of them, but they just stared at it.

Randy: Well-fed fish. What did you use for bait?
Travis: Well, I caught mine on cheese.

Randy: Cheese? You just put it on the hook?
Travis: Yes, you take the hook and put a little ball on the hook so it can't be seen.

Randy: It's sort of a trick thing.
Travis: If they see the hook, they will just stare at it.

Randy: So where was this?
Travis: Well, it was at Camp Tadmoran. We went down to camp. We had time to fish. There was rocketry, pine wood derby cars, and a shooting range, and stuff.

Randy: So, how long did the camp last?
Travis: Something like 3 or 4 days.

Randy: Were you there the whole time?
Travis: Yes. Me and my dad were there.

Randy: You and your dad went together?
Travis: It was a son and dad thing.

Randy: Must have been exciting.
Travis: Yes, it was. There were a lot of people there.

Randy: Did they have cabins for people to stay at or did you camp?
Travis: No, you just either brung your tent or RV. My dad and I just slept in our car.

Randy: That's the way I would do it.

Randy supports Travis by showing a genuine interest in his topic and begins a conversation that encourages Travis to discuss, provide details, and rethink the experience. This conversation provides the opportunity for Travis to further develop his account of the experience and add the missing bits of information. His rethinking and oral rehearsal will lead to revisions that we will examine later in this chapter.

One purpose of the writer is to convey meaning effectively. When the author becomes aware of a meaning gap, he or she may revise, for example, the author realizes that a point did not make sense, that the reader might need more information, or that the purpose (to convince) was not met. As a result of the accompanying discussion between Randy and Travis, Travis develops a more coherent message and discovers what he really wanted to say.

The portion of dialogue above took place in a larger supportive social context that was built over the course of the school year. The social context is based on a pact in which the responders, such as Randy and other members of the classroom writing community, agree to be interested in, reflect on the sense of the written text, ask questions, and provide the opportunity for the author to explain orally. Authors (e.g., Travis) agree to share their writing, receive helpful feedback, and rethink what they wrote. Finally, each one agrees to accept both roles, writer and responder, receiving and giving support.

I refer to the social context described above as the community of writers in the classroom.

The Nature of Text

Revising and editing are possible because text is malleable. Both involve changes in text not written in stone. Modeling of revision by the teacher and the arrangement of classroom materials conveys the idea that early drafts are tentative. When students see their teacher revise using scissors, staplers, and tape and when these tools are included in their writing area, students view revising as an integral part of writing. Alternately, teachers can model revising processes with a word processor and a large screen monitor. With either set of tools, students see that rethinking leads to revising and this can be accomplished through moving, deleting, and inserting text.

Revising vs. Editing

Revising and editing reflect different types of changes. Revision occurs at the idea level. It involves global changes such as the rearranging of ideas, strengthening of arguments, adding detail and deleting of redundant information. Editing involves making local changes at the word and sentence level including spelling, word choice, and grammatical constructions.

Many proficient writers find it helpful to concentrate on revising before editing. These writers get the gist of what they want to say down first. They suspend judgement about local details and focus on what they want to say and how to organize and develop it. Immature writers do not have such a plan. Working at the word and sentence level, they are guided by asking, "What do I say next?" Immature writers need guidance and support in topic selection, rehearsal, composing, rereading, and revision.

Although revising and editing are not done linearly and in lock-step, beginning writers need coaching so they can think about and do first things first. Elementary students need models in which they set broad goals and use effective procedures. Prewriting lessons discussed earlier contain examples of scaffolding that helps students plan like proficient writers. In this chapter and the next chapter, we will discuss ways to provide scaffolds for students to revise and edit respectively.

Develop a Purpose for Revising

There are many purposes for writing such as to entertain, persuade ,and report. And within each purpose lies the seeds for potential revision, i.e., to more closely realize that goal. But if we step back a moment, we realize that many of our students have not found those purposes sufficient reason to revise. Revising is not done for only an abstract quality, but also for significant others. The motivation to revise comes from those who are important to the author, for example, peers and teachers who read, comment on, and appreciate their writing. The students' audience may extend beyond the classroom to include parents (newsletters and books) and students in other grades (their articles included in the school newspaper, their books shelved in the library, their essays displayed on bulletin boards in halls, and their writing sent electronically to students around the world). Chapter Five explores opportunities to publish and share writing.

The teacher is an important audience for students, but not the only one. Too often the students' only audience has been the teacher, and students knew they were doing their writing assignment fcr the teacher. They expected teachers to red mark their papers indicating errors. Writing teachers have found and researchers (e.g., Freedman and others, 1987) have documented that this hasn't worked. Most students don't revise based on that feedback, nor do they recall the corrective information when they do their next writing assignment. Often red-marked papers move quickly to the waste basket. Researchers such as Donald Graves and Lucy Calkins, and many experienced writing teachers found that students respond better to the writing task when they write for several audiences and seek to convey personally important information and communicate it effectively. The focus of teacher and student is to convey meaning. If the writer doesn't have something important to say, saying it correctly isn't very fulfilling. On the other hand when one has found something important to say and has interested teachers, parents, and peers reading and responding, then saying it will become very important.

BECOMING A COMMUNITY OF WRITERS AND REWRITERS

Develop an Attitude and Expectation for Revising

Although Pulitzer Prize winner Donald Murray says "Writing is revising," beginning writers do not necessarily start with this belief. They may respond more like the fifth grader who watched as the teacher pulled out a red pen and said "I'm not going to have to copy it over again!" When one fifth grade teacher, Tim Riordon, asked his students how the previous day had gone with the substitute teacher. They explained, "It went O.K., but we didn't have our writing time." What causes students to miss their writing time? There are three critical factors that help students revise like writers: the expectation that writing will occur daily, the understanding that writing is revising, and the dialogue between the author and the reader or listener.

Provide a Regular and Adequate Time for Rewriting

Members of the writing community gather to write on a regular basis. The agenda for the writing time varies depending on the needs of students and their place in the writing process. The teacher may open a writing workshop with a mini-lesson on some aspect of writing such as beginning with an interesting lead sentence. She may read the lead of a piece of literature the class has read. After discussing that lead, she asks several students who have written interesting leads to read them. The class writes an interesting lead together. She suggests that students select a piece of writing they have completed or that is in progress and examine the lead, identify the most interesting part of that report or story and begin with that part first. After discovering an alternative lead, the author retells the story to a partner beginning with the new lead.

Each day students will attend to some phase of writing. Writing time will include writing instruction, sharing of successes and problems, group problem solving, writing, revising, and editing. The experiences leading to writing will change daily, the content of the writing time will change, but students should expect to write regularly and follow a routine. Students should anticipate the writing time and mentally prepare for it.

Writing is Revising

First, students expect to write daily. Secondly, they have an expectation for what will occur during the writing time. If writing is revising, then much time will be devoted to examining one's writing, thinking about it, rereading, getting feedback, reorganizing, and rewriting. Thirdly, students expect informative and socially appropriate feedback during a dialogue between the author and responder(s).

Response to Writing

How can feedback be given without criticism? First students understand that they are sharing writing in progress. It is not finished. The author is anticipating a dialogue about the work. Second feedback is directed at the meaning level. And the response is often presented in question form: What did you mean when you said...? For example, Barbara, a fourth grader, wrote:

> "We were excited when we heard that my mother had a baby. My dad would take all of us in the car to see her. On our way to the hospital to see my mother and our new baby, my dad stopped at a flower stand. He bought three day old roses. Then we drove to the hospital and saw our mother and new brother."

A classmate asked, "Why did he buy three day old roses?"

"He was too cheap."

Her classmates laughed. Barbara decided to include that in the story.

When early feedback is not about the meaning or value of the piece, it can be interpreted as criticism. Criticism can hurt. One student telling another student what is wrong with her writing can lead to problems very quickly. Just the anticipation of criticism can cause the author to be defensive. After Barbara had read her story to the class, and before any student could respond, she commented on her own story:

"This story is dumb, isn't it."

The teacher, Larry Lewin, ignored the comment and asked the students to receive the piece by responding positively and constructively.

Silvia: "I bet you were excited about the new baby."
Andrew: I liked the descriptive words "Three day old flowers."

Then a classmate asked Barbara a question to help clarify the narrative, and she responded in the spirit of the question.

Third, the feedback to the author is oral and the author answers orally. After discussing the point, the author takes some notes. For example, the author may write keywords in the margin and draws arrows to the place that will be reexamained later. The author, not the responder, writes on her own paper. Responsibility for revising stays with the author. The responders begin the dialogue by stating what they liked about the piece. A smile comes to the face of the author when someone shows genuine interest in his work. The teacher must model this procedure both in demonstration before the class and in the one-on-one work done with individual students.

An environment of trust and respect gradually develops as the teacher and students work together. They *become* a writing community; they do not start with it.

In the red pencil classroom, students expect the worst in the response to their writing, and when asked to comment on other students writing, they expect to make critical comments about their classmate's work. By contrast, in a community of writers, the purpose of dialogue between reader and writer is to help the writer rethink the text and through the verbal explanation rehearse the content for later revision. Criticism tends to close discussion. Alternately, if suggestions are made for improvement, rather than direct criticism, the responder does the thinking for the author. The dialogue needs to provide a positive social climate, give feedback to the author, allow the author to think and explain, and make decisions about improving the text. The following guidelines have been reformulated by the authors and used successfully with their students, but their roots are in the work of writing researchers and teachers such as Donald Graves, Lucy Calkins, Randy Boone, and Larry Lewin.

Guidelines for Revision

Writing teachers have found that the guidelines that follow help introduce content revision to their students. After students use this scaffold to gain a sense for the procedure, teachers remove the structure and introduce specific reasons for revising that are focused on an author's piece of writing and the author's goals.

Let us assume that the author has participated in a stirring prewriting activity and has had the opportunity to write a first draft. The author is ready for feedback. The author and one or two responders sit down at a table. Their roles are as follows:

- The author reads aloud a piece of writing and the responders listen and may read along silently.
- After the author is finished, the responders each say at least one positive comment about the author's works using the author's words if possible, e.g., I could see "The rattlesnake lift it's head" as you read.
- The responders ask the author about the areas that are unclear, e.g., "What did you mean when you said...?"
- The author answers the questions and provides information to make the meaning clearer. The author takes notes in the margins or be-

tween the lines using only a few words to jog her memory. To mark the spot of the confusion an arrow may be drawn from the key words to the place in the text that needs to be clearer. If a question leads to a larger revision, the question may be written after or before the text.

- Later the author will decide what to revise and how.

Practice Responding

Practice with your colleagues. If you have a colleague who wants to teach students to revise, or someone who is trained in a process writing approach, practice on each other's writing. Share your writing. Get and give feedback. Revise. Discuss your progress. Another alternative is to participate in one of the annual summer workshops sponsored by the National Writing Project (The National Writing Project address is listed in the bibliography and they can provide the address of your closest site.) These learning situations provide opportunity to think about what to say and to model helpful responses. A good resouce to read as you work with students is *The Art of Teaching Writing* by Lucy Calkins. In Section III on "Writing Conferences," Calkins discusses purposes of conferences.

Reflections on Response

There is no magic formula for providing response. Here are some hints to keep in mind: Think of your comments and questions as a scaffold for students to use to accomplish what they couldn't do otherwise. Your dialogue with students should enable them to rehearse orally and discover their own answer. Gauge your reaction to the abilities of the student. Don't swamp a struggling student with suggestions and questions. Ask enough questions to get this student moving. Before you leave a struggling student ask "Now where will you start?" and then "What will you do next?" "Show me where you will insert that." "Draw an arrow to the spot" and "What words will remind you of the change you just described?"

One word of caution. Don't take over the student's work. It should reflect the student's ideas, not yours. You become more adept at these strategies as you try them. Don't worry about asking the wrong questions. Initially, your responses may not be as helpful as they will be after you practice for awhile. Try it. Share your students' work with your colleagues to get other reactions. Students will hear the types of response you provide and will use them to model their conferences with each other.

A Fourth Grade Teacher Shares Her Perspective

To provide another perspective on teaching writing, I interviewed Darlene Head, a fourth grade teacher, Springfield School District, Oregon. Nearly two years ago she took a course in the teaching of writing. She has adapted ideas based on a process writing model in her class and is placing more emphasis on the teaching of writing by actually having students compose, revise, edit, and publish their work. Darlene's story is an example of one way to make the teaching of writing work in a classroom. There is not one way to teach writing, but we can gain insights from each other.

Writing Schedule

Mrs. Head aims to teach writing every day of the week, but on the average has time for writing three days a week. If she had a writing time period it would be 9:50-10:30 (10:30 is recess), but daily activities cause her to adjust the time. Often, the writing period is extended because students need more time for closure. Students usually run out of time for writing. Their writing spills into recess, before someone notices the time. She explains, "I never seem to have as much time for writing as those suggest who write the books such as Calkins and Graves."

Writing Atmosphere

Last year, class atmosphere was a big concern when it came to doing process writing because she had quite a chatty class. Writing time became a visiting time with little writing being done. So she set limits and said "This is not a talk session." At the time that students needed to talk to someone about their writing, she designated areas of the room reserved for that purpose. During the composing stage, she emphasized quiet, uninterrupted thinking and writing time in the room.

When students started to share their writing with a friend, she worried about student time on-task and noise that disrupted other writers. Students were to use their twelve inch voice (a voice that cannot be heard beyond the end of their ruler) during their conversation. If their conversations got off-track, she asked "Is this author talk? If not, you need to get back on topic." This was an effective way to have students return to their writing conversation.

About 50% of the time, students select their own topics and type of writing. Other times students are working on the same writing assignment because the project grew out of other areas of the curriculum. Mrs. Head assigns the genre and students select the topic. Although students may be at different stages of the writing process, they are working toward the same goal. For example, if they are doing fable writing in conjunction with their reading, the whole class will write fables. Writing on one topic often continues for extended periods of time.

Structure of the Writing Period

Writing time begins with a mini lesson. Mrs. Head may introduce a prewriting activity to start a new writing assignment or highlight a piece of student writing to discuss a solution to a problem other students are encountering. The mini lesson may address any issue, focus point, skill, or writing objective. For example, if students are beginning to write a report, Mrs. Head starts with selecting a topic. Then she models a web and talks aloud as she constructs a web on a transparency. If this is the first time the class has done a web, she will ask them to do one; however, if they have had experiences with webbing, students may choose their own prewriting activity, e.g., a word bank.

Three areas of the room are designated for peer conferences. When students are ready to try out what they have written with a friend, they select one person, go to the area and discuss the piece of writing. While students are writing and conferencing, she circulates around the room working with individuals and monitoring conferences. From time to time, she gathers three to four individuals who need more help and works with them in a group setting. It was difficult to find the time to work with students individually while the rest of the class worked on their own or shared writing with a friend. This year she had a parent volunteer who helped students publish their writing. This made it easier to work with individual students on their writing.

As she observed peer conferences, she noticed that listeners tend to make primarily positive remarks during the writing conference, instead of asking helpful questions about unclear areas. However, she notes that in peer conferences, the act of reading ones writing to a friend and discussing it in positive ways helps the author uncover the biggest problems. When comparing papers written before peer conferencing to those to those written with peer conferences, Mrs. Head found that writings with peer revising are much better. An added advantage is that the peer conference removes her from the loop for one more step, providing added time to concentrate on those who need her help.

Often students receive the best feedback when she leads a small group (4-5 students) or whole group conference on one student's writing. During these meetings, students ask the author more helpful questions. For example, she will take a piece of student writing without a name, place it on the overhead, read it, and discuss it. In this context, students feel free to say there is something they don't understand.

Students choose their own partners for revising. They usually choose a friend, not necessarily the best writer in the class. If Mrs. Head isn't part of the revising group, students select one peer with which to share their work. Students usually conference when they have finished something, but they also do so when they are stuck.

Revision Marks

Using an overhead transparency, Mrs. Head models the rearrangement of text. She talks about sentences that are out of order. During a mini lesson, she shows the group how to indicate that a sentence is to be moved to a new spot by circling it and drawing an arrow to a better place for it. Students also, plan movement of text by numbering the order of the paragraphs. Some students are able to plan the moves in their head. They didn't need such explicit instruction. Others need to draw the arrows or number the order. Students often make physical revisions by cutting and taping.

Student Attitude Toward Writing

Students enjoy writing when it is imbedded in a context, i.e., when writing is related to the reading they are doing, and she begins with prewriting activities, and they know their writing may be published. Mrs. Head concluded: "There is no comparison in attitude toward writing now and 10 years ago when I taught writing traditionally. Then students disliked writing and it was stressful for all of us. Now it is a positive experience."

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Writing and Computers

Today, most elementary classrooms in the United States have one computer. Some schools have computers labs and others provide several computers for each classroom. This manual was designed for teacher use in each of those classrooms. The lessons, information sheets, templates and ideas can be modified to fit any teacher's situation.

Word Processing and Revising

Most students prefer using a word processor for writing. If a distinction is made between the various stages of writing, the attitudinal evidence is even stronger for using word processors. I (Wetzel, 1986) surveyed a class of fourth graders who had been using a word processor for over a year in their writing. Eighty percent of the students preferred using a word processor for revising and editing their work.

Those who prefer the word processor for revising say that it is easier and faster to delete, add, and move text when you do not have to recopy the entire document by pencil. These students understand that writing is revising. On the other hand, pencil-using students who do not understand revising or intend to revise, are not more inclined to do so when given a computer. The tool does not make a writer. Teachers who choose to make available information age tools to their students should do so while they are fostering a community of writers in their classroom.

When and Where to Revise

The number of computers that you have available at one setting and the frequency you are allowed to use them, influences how much your students can accomplish with them.

In the one computer classroom, you may best keep it in your hands. If you have access to a large screen monitor, it makes an excellent tool for doing group writing. Later you can discuss various changes and model revising procedures.

If you have the luxury of a lab with a computer for each student, discussions about each student's writing can take place at the monitor or on a printed copy. Shorter pieces of writing can be revised effectively on the screen. To read and make changes in longer documents on the screen, the author must scroll back and forth to locate needed parts of the text. Documents that run several pages can be edited more effectively when they are printed out. Once printed, the author can read to the listeners as they follow along. In response to the questions and comments of the responders, the author can write key words in the margins and between the double spaced lines, as well as before and after the text. When ready to revise, the author returns to the screen and makes the revisions as noted on the page.

Finally, let us consider the classroom where you have some computers in your classroom, but not one for every student. For example, if you have four computers in your classroom, students may be able to do much of their writing using those computers. Students do different tasks on a staggered schedule. While some students are doing prewriting activities and composing first drafts by pencil, others are entering what they have written. Those who have printed copies dialogue with peers away from the computers and insert remarks and indicate changes on the paper copy. When their computer turn arrives, they will make the indicated changes. (See Computer Arrangements for diagrams of different computer configurations.)

Computer-in-Writing Recommendations

We want to place information age tools in the hands of students. These are the tools they will increasingly use throughout their school and adult lives. Using computers in a writing program based on our best theory and practice makes sense. The computer becomes a tool that helps students think and write, reflect, and rewrite.

Implications for the Classroom Teacher

Student and teacher roles are changing. Students are originators of ideas for topics. They learn to compose by getting down their thoughts first as notes, then in a rough draft. They learn to listen to the writing of others in new ways. They learn to think about what they have written and how to change it. Students are expected to become self-managers who interact with peers in socially appropriate and helpful ways. Peer conferences work to the degree that students stay on task, provide positive and question-oriented feedback, and accept the roles of author and listener.

Teachers create a climate for a classroom community to develop and teach the strategies that encourage students to become writers. Teachers model "how to" by sharing their writing via transparencies, orally discussing the decisions that need to be made, solving problems by talking through them, listing alternatives, drawing arrows to help remember, and checking to see if writing goals have been met.

Teachers provide procedures, class time, and assistance for students to do today what they could not do by themselves earlier. The teacher is a scaffolder more than a provider of answers.

Each new classroom of students has its own personality. Introducing new roles takes time. Don't expect to do it all at once. Darlene Head focused on three areas of adjustment.

1. "My fourth graders resisted not doing it perfectly the first time." Just getting their ideas down without stopping to correct was something new for them.
2. It was difficult for them to question friends about ideas that are incomplete or that don't make sense.
3. Their tendency to use peer dialogues to discuss writing rather than visiting required constant monitoring on her part.

Your classroom will provide its own unique challenges. We encourage you to take small steps when implementing new ideas. We also encourage you to share attempts and successes with your colleagues who are doing similar things.

The measure of your success is not in how well you have followed the guidelines and procedures discussed in this chapter. Neither Randy Boone or Darlene Head took these guidelines as "the way to do it." The guidelines are intended to provide scaffolding for you to try new ideas in your classroom. Each teacher implements the ideas in ways in which he or she is comfortable and in ways that are least disruptive to classroom management. There is no one right way to do it. Teachers develop unique communities of writers in their classes. Their students write, think, share, revise, and publish their work. The students in their classes view themselves as authors. That is the measure of success.

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MINI-LESSON 7
CATEGORIZING WRITING AND RECORDING THE TYPE ON THE FOLDER

Objectives

Students will generate and understand different types of writing. They will demonstrate this by identifying the type of each piece of their writing and by writing the type in their folders.

Equipment Needed

Chalk board
Butcher paper

Preparation

Before the lesson, write these categories on the board or make a transparency of the template.

Title	*Today's Date*	*Type of Writing*	*Need to Print*	*Copy in Folder*

Discussion

One of our goals is to provide opportunities for students to write in a variety of genre. It is best to teach this mini-lesson after students have had an opportunity to generate different types of writing. During the course of the year your students will most likely have had opportunities to write for a variety of reasons, for example, class newsletters, books, contests, local newspapers, thank you letters, letters of complaint, weather reports. I think the best way to categorize student writing is to use a combination of common sense headings and traditional genre. Here are some categories that may apply to your grade level:

Personal Experience Narratives
Plays
Poetry
Fables
Fairy Tales
Interviews
Fiction
Cartoons
Journals
Jokes
Jokes
Biographies
Autobiographies
Wordless books

For a more complete list of categories generated by middle school students see Atwell, Nancy (1987). "Kinds of Writing That Have Emerged in Boothbay's Writing Workshops." *In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents.* pp. 269-270.

Opening

"Today we are going to decide the type of writing each of your titles belongs in. Let's start by discussing pieces you have read (long and short) during the past year. You may include books, articles, pieces in newspapers, and others." Record titles on butcher paper as students supply them. You may add examples to the list to widen the scope. After the class has generated a good list, ask them to generate the type of work it would fit in. Post the list in the classroom so students can refer to it as they categorize future pieces of writing. As students read or write new types of literature, you can add them to your posted list.

Examples	*Type*
Where the Sidewalk Ends	Poetry
Skinny Bones	Fiction
The Boy, the Dog, and the Frog	Wordless Book
Sarah Plain and Tall	Historical Fiction
Beckett	Baseball Card Magazine
Rumplestillskin	Fairy tale
The Gingerbread Boy	Fable
Chocolate Chip Cookie Recipe	Recipe
How to Save the Environment	To the Editor

Now ask students to consider the types of writing they have recorded. Ask students to read some titles and to suggest the type of writing.

Recording Writing Progress

"You have been supplying the information needed to record the development of your writing on the back cover of the folder. Now we can fill in the blank that we left: **Type of Writing**. Turn to that category on the back of your folder. Look at the categories that we made today."

Illustrate the placement of the **Type of Writing** on your overhead or on the board.

Title	*Today's Date*	*Type of Writing*	*Need to Print*	*Copy in Folder*
Lost Dog1	Sept. 15	Personal Experience	Yes	No
Lost Dog2	Sept. 17	Personal Experience	No	Yes
Lost Dog3	Sept. 18	Personal Experience	Yes	No
New Friend	Oct. 3	Poetry	No	No

If a category fits your piece of writing, write it on the blank below. If it doesn't fit the types we have listed, we may need to add new types.

Reinforcing Recording Information

Often teachers find it easiest to introduce a new type of writing to the class by reading something to the class in that genre or sharing something that they or a student has written. Whenever necessary you may create a new list of titles and types to reflect the progress of the students. Also this background information provides the basis for talking to students about taking risks and writing (or reading) in new areas. Teachers have found that they can encourage students to write in new genre by pointing out the narrow focus of their past writings and then contracting with them to write in a new genre during the next grading period.

MINI-LESSON 8
MODELING PARTICIPATION IN A WRITING CONFERENCE

Objectives

Students will understand the purpose of the writing conference. They will demonstrate their understanding by giving the teacher feedback on his/her writing.

Materials Needed

You will need the same equipment you used when you wrote with your students. For example, if you used a computer with a large monitor, you will use it to model the process of receiving feedback and noting student comments in your text.

You will need the information sheets that follow this lesson:
- Guidelines for the Writing Conference
- Author's Job
- Listener's Job

Make transparencies of each and enough photocopies for each student to have to keep in their folder while learning to respond and ask questions.

Time Needed

About 30 minutes

Preparation to Revise

In Lessons 3,4, and 5 students have selected a topic, gathered and shared ideas for their writing, and wrote a first draft. You modeled procedures for them to accomplish this.

Opening

"Can you remember the conversation you had with a friend. One person talks and the other person listens. Then you change places and the listener is the talker. If you don't understand what your friend meant, you ask 'What do you mean?' or 'When did you want to go?' and so on. In a few minutes I want you to have a conversation with me about the piece of writing I started when you were writing. This conversation is called a conference. I will start. Then you will respond."

Explain the purpose of the conference:

"We do conferences because the author wants to communicate with the listeners or readers. The author wants to know if the readers appreciated what was written. We want our writing to make sense to those who hear or read it. Often our writing is unclear. Perhaps our readers didn't understand what we meant to say. To let the writer know, the listener's guide feedback to the writer. The writer does not need to follow this advice. The writer will decide later what needs to be done."

Procedures to Model

Here are the guidelines for this conversation called a conference."

1. Review the *Guidelines for the Writing Conference, Author's Job,* and *Listener's Job.*
2. Hand out and explain the *Listener's Job.* Discuss eachpoint on the handout and provide examples. The students will be able to refer to it while they respond to your piece of writing.
3. Point out that you are following the first guideline:"Author reads the piece aloud."
4. After reading your piece, note that they are to follow the second guideline: "Listeners offer positive comments." Monitor, their comments. Receive a few positive comments.
5. Note that they are to follow the third guideline: "Listeners ask questions." As students ask questions, answer the questions, explain further your thinking, and then go to the place in the text and write a few key words that remind you of the question and your answer.
6. Hand out the student copy of the *Author's Job* and note that you are following #2 of the *Author's Job.*

If you are using an overhead transparency, draw arrows to the place where the text is unclear and you might make changes. (Use another color ink for the arrows and key words.) If you are using a word processor, move the cursor to the text and type a few asterisks before and after the key words. Explain that these key words may lead you to make changes later. Continue doing this with each question. When you receive enough comments to revise your piece, let the students know that they helped you think of new information to add, or new ways to say it, or make it clearer.

7. Ask students to write one sentence to explain a reason for doing a writing conference. After experiencing your example, the answer should be clearer.

Reasons may include any of the following:

"We do conferences because the author wants to communicate with the listeners or readers. The author wants to know if the readers appreciated what was written. We want our writing to make sense to those who hear or read it. Often our writing is unclear. Perhaps our readers didn't understand what we meant to say. To let the writer know, the listener's guide feedback to the writer. The writer does not need to follow this advice. The writer will decide later what needs to be done."

8. Prepare for your next lesson. Tell students you will want to do a conference on their writing. Ask for volunteers to have their piece of writing placed on a transparency or on the computer monitor to receive feedback. Offer anonymity if students are hesitant to volunteer. Collect 4-6 papers.

GUIDELINES FOR THE WRITING CONFERENCE

What does each student do in a writing conference?

First, the author reads the piece aloud.

Second, listeners offer positive comments.

Next, listeners ask questions.

Finally, the author decides what to revise.

AUTHOR'S JOB

1. The author reads his/her piece aloud. (If it is longer than a page, the listeners may look at the piece as the author reads it.)

2. After a question is asked, think about a word or two that will help you remember your answer to the question. Write the word or two in the margin or next to the place in the piece that it belongs. If there isn't room for the words, draw an arrow from the words to the place in the piece that they belong.

3. You decide later whether you think that changing the part makes it clearer or improves your piece.

THE LISTENER'S JOB

1. Listen carefully to the author reading his or her story.

2. Make your comments positive not critical.

3. Be specific and use the author's own words.
   - I could just see it when you said ________(authors words.)
   - I liked the part where you said ________ because ________.
   - These words ________ helped me understand ________.

4. Ask questions to help the author think out loud about the writing.
   - How did you get interested in this area?
   - Just tell me in your own words what happened.
   - What part did you like the best?
     Tell more about that.
   - What happened after you ________ ?

5. Ask about areas that are unclear to help the author make sense:
   - What is the most important part?
   - What part could you make into another story?
   - What happened first ________ and then ________ and last?
   - What did you mean when you said ________?
   - Is there another way to end?

6. Ask questions to help the author begin to rewrite:
   - What revisions will you make?
   - Where will you start?
   - What words will help you remember what to write?
   - Can you draw an arrow to the place where you will add or delete?

MINI-LESSON 9
PARTICIPATING IN A WRITING CONFERENCE

Objectives

Students will understand the role of the author and listener in a writing conference. Students will demonstrate understanding by providing oral feedback on student writing samples.

Time Needed

About 30 minutes

Materials Needed

Overhead Projector

You will need to make transparencies of the writing samples that follow this lesson titled *Jennifer 1* and *Jennifer 2*.
Also make a transparency of your students' writings you collected in lesson 6.

Preparation

Before the lesson read both writing samples. Writing sample, *Jennifer 1*, will allow students to practice giving feedback to a student. Think about the questions that Jennifer received and the changes she made in *Jennifer 2*. Usually students raise the same types of meaning-related questions about Jennifer's new house. *Jennifer 2* will allow students to see how Jennifer revised as a result of that feedback. Finally you may use the writings of your volunteers to provide added practice for the listeners.

Opening

"Do you remember the comments and questions you gave me on my writing? Today you will be providing feedback to students on their writings."

Procedure

1. Review the guidelines you handed out previously.

2. Place Jennifer's *Writing Sample 1* on projector and read it aloud.

3. Ask student to respond. If they immediately ask questions without saying anything positive about Jennifer's writing, remind them. Provide feedback for students on their comments. Model acceptable comments as needed.

4. As students ask questions, move to the place in the text they are discussing, and write key words to remind them of the question on the transparency using another color marking pen. Typical questions include:

   - Did Lisa and her sister get to choose any room in the house?
   - What was the girl's room like?
   - What was the boy's room like?

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- How did they finally decide?
- Which room did Lisa get?

5. When you have received several positive comments, and several helpful questions, examine the changes Jennifer made in her writing after she received feedback from the teacher and students.

6. Place *Jennifer 2* on the overhead projector. Make explicit the connection between the questions asked and the changes that were made.

7. Ask students to respond to your volunteer's papers. Insert comments in response to questions as you have on the sample provided. If the author would like to explain or respond to the questions, you may insert key words to help the author recall the question and answer.

8. Pull the lesson together by discussing again why we conference, and then explain that will be giving and receiving feedback on their pieces of writing when each student author thinks it necessary.

WRITING SAMPLE 1

First draft: Jennifer

The day we slept for the first time in our house, I was really excited becuase I had wanted to actually live in our new house. I looked around our new house and saw all the empty rooms. Lisa and I were trying to decide which room to have. There was a girl's room and a boy's room. Lisa said I could have the girl's room. I said if she wanted to to she could have it.

WRITING SAMPLE II

Everything Jennifer added is underlined.

OUR NEW HOUSE

The night we slept for the first time in our house, I was really excited becuase I had wanted to live in our new house. I looked around our new house and saw all the empty rooms. Lisa and I were trying to decide which room to have (our parent's let us choose our bedrooms) There was a girl's and a boy's room. The girls's room had Pricsilla curtains and Holly Hobby wall paper and the boy's room had Superman shades and basketball wallpaper. Lisa said I could have the girl's room. I said if she wanted to. to she could have it. We kept arguing about it. Lisa said she would have the boy's room. I was kind of glad Lisa took the boy's room becuase I thought that the girl's room was prettier.

MINI-LESSON 10

SAVING SUBSEQUENT DRAFTS TO NEW TITLES AND RECORDING EACH ON THE FOLDER

Objective

Students will demonstrate their understanding of the writing conference by confering with a partner who requests a conference.

Procedure

Some students will be ready for a peer conference. Designate an area of the room where one student can give feedback to another (Area A). These students do not need to be at computers. They will be working from printed copies. Other students will want to continue their writing and work without being disturbed. The computers should be designated for this purpose (Area B). Yet others will need a meeting with you or will want to discuss what they are doing with you. I assume that your conferences will be conducted while students are looking at their piece on the screen. To note potential changes, these students should move the cursor to the area that is in question and type the word(s) in capital letters that will remind them of what to do when they revise and after you go to the next student. Designate the computers that will be used as a general writing area for writing (Area C).

I like to do short conferences (30 seconds to 2 minutes) with the students who are writing in Area C. A short conference may be simply the question: What are you working on? How is it going. You may wish to move among the students in random order. This is good way to monitor the activities of each person in the room and keep everyone on track.

Opening

"Today, those who wish to receive feedback on their writing will be able to do so. You will follow the *Guidelines for the Writing Conference*. Let us review: What will you do first? How do you say something that might be useful to the author? Why do you use the author's own words? Then what? What sort of questions can you ask? Why do you ask the questions?"

Here are the directions I use to explain the three areas of the room:

"We will use three areas of the room. Those who want to receive feedback on their writing from another student (do a writing conference) will meet at **Area A** of the room. Here the author will need a printed copy of his or her piece of writing and a pencil to take a few notes and draw arrows to the place of changes. Remember, the author reads, the listeners follows along. The author draws arrows and writes a word between the lines that will be a reminder of what to revise later. Both the author and listener will need to use their 12" voices so others can continue to work undisturbed."

"Those who want to write and not be disturbed will use the computers in **Area B.**"

"The rest of you can write using the computers in **Area C**. I will confer briefly with you as you write and as I move around the lab or classroom."

Note: It would be nice if the students would remember their 12-inch voices and who belongs in which area from this time forth, but alas, as usual you will need to review and remind often.

Debriefing

Toward the end of the writing time, you may wish to bring the students back together to share how the confering went. You may ask students how their conferences went as well as their work in different areas of the room (Areas A, B, and C).

For further discussion of conference procedures see:

Graves, Donald (1983). Section II. *Teachers and Children at Work.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
Atwell, Nancie (1987). Section II. *In the Middle.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

CHAPTER 4 EDITING

What is Editing?

Revision involves broad strokes of the brush; editing involves fine light strokes. Usually revising takes place before editing. When authors decide to make changes in the message or the content of the piece, to re-order or rewrite words, sentences, and paragraphs, they are revising. After the message is clear and meets the author's goals, the author looks more closely at the wider audience for the piece and the way it may be published. If a piece of writing is to be published, spelling, punctuation, and standard grammatical construction become the focus of attention. Now the writer becomes an editor.

When Should Students Edit?

When a student wants to publish a piece of writing, it is time to edit it. Remember, students will not finish every piece they start. Some topics will not really work for them. These pieces will not be edited. There should be an expectation that a student will finish a piece every so often, for example, every two weeks. Obviously it depends on the student and the type of writing. Is it a short piece or an autobiography with chapters?

The publisher helps to set the standards for publication. The teacher assumes this role in the classroom. Student writing can be published in many formal and informal ways. It can be shared orally. It can be placed on a bulletin board or sent electronically. It can be accepted for a class or school newsletter. Student books can be bound and placed in the classroom library or the school library. Pieces that are published should meet or begin to approximate English language conventions.

How Much Should Students Edit?

What and how much should students be expected to correct on their papers? The answer requires that the teacher achieve a sense of balance between the development of the student and the standards of the publisher. On the one hand, learning to write develops through many years of exposure to written and oral language. Third graders are usually not expected to master the colon and semicolon or to use compound sentences with the same verb tense in each independent clause. On the other hand, the teacher needs to establish standards and students need to develop a writing conscience that reflects a need to achieve the standards. A student's book that is to be bound, catalogued, and placed on the school's library shelves should approach certain standards of expectation. The teacher needs to make expectations realistic and explicit. For example, the goal for a student who composes words with a large number of invented spellings may be to circle five words that don't use a dictionary spelling and find the dictionary spelling (Note 1). To balance standards and child development, teachers have found a three-part strategy useful:

1. Students make progress toward the standards.
2. Teachers provide information to parents about particular pieces of writing that go home.
3. Prior to publication, teachers correct some errors that the child can not recognize at the present stage of development.

On student writing that is taken home, stamps or stickers that say "first draft" or "edited for spelling only" allow parents and students to know the status of each piece (Note 2). This kind of information helps parents to understand what the child is learning, gives a focus for parent response to the piece, and reduces parent expectation for perfection of every piece. These remarks reflect a process approach to writing and provide a lens through which to view the writing.

Notes:

1. See Sandra Wilde, *Invented Spelling*, Heinmann Press 1991, for more information on setting spelling goals for students.
2. For examples of ink stamps with writing messages, see *Fearless Design's Rubber Words of Encouragement* Catalog, P.O. Box 8487, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.

For further information on editing see:

Calkins, Lucy (1986). Chapter 20: Editing: Last but Not Least. *The Art of Teaching Writing.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

Atwell, Nancie (1987). Chapter 5: Responding to Writers. *In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

MINI-LESSON 11

RECORDING EDITING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES IN THE FOLDER

Objectives

Students will record new skills they are learning and using in their writing.

Time Needed:

Five minutes (This is a mini-lesson. You will need to review and reteach the ideas in this lesson from time-to-time until students internalize the procedure.)

Materials Needed

Writing folders

Procedure

As you teach a student a new skill, he or she writes it on the back inside cover under "What ______ knows about writing".

For example, Jason turns in a paper to be edited by the teacher. You notice that Jason's final paper contains invented spellings that the student has not identified. You might explain to Jason that one of the first steps to becoming a speller is to locate words that he thinks are invented. The goal is for Jason to circle five words that he thinks are not dictionary spellings. As shown below, Jason writes I can "Circle any word that I'm not sure of," and circles words not spelled in a standard way in his next-to-the-final draft.

What Jason knows about writing

Skill	*Date*	*Found in:*
Circle any word I'm not sure of	Jan. 15	A Surprise 2

On another paper the teacher notes that Jason is not capitalizing the title of a final draft. As shown below, Jason adds to the list: I can "Put capitals on the first and last and important words in the title."

Skill	*Date*	*Found in:*
Circle any word I'm not sure of	Jan. 15	A Surprise 3
Put capitals on the first and last words and important words in the title	Feb. 1	Together Again 2

Student Response

After you have worked with several individuals and they have recorded new skills in their folders, ask them to share their newly recorded skills with the class.

MINI-LESSON 12

BECOMING AN INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Objective

Students will understand the self-editing procedures and record the language usage skill in their folders. Understanding will be demonstrated by students finding and correcting surface level mistakes.

Time Needed

5 minutes

Materials Needed

Writing folders
Make a transparency of the information sheet that follows this lesson: How to Proofread

Discussion

Self editing is a very important step. Students should be taught to self edit as early as first grade.

Opening

"Think about the way the piece you are working on will be published. Write down one way it might be published. Will you want mistakes in your writing when it is published? The copy that is to be published must be your best. Today you will learn a way to fix the little things in your paper like spelling, capital letters, punctuation, and complete sentences."

Procedure

Stage 1: Self Editing
The author should find and correct as many items as possible in their papers. Student should use their "What I know about writing" lists to refresh their memories of possible items to identify in their writing. Review the steps in self editing on the "How to Proofread" information sheet.

Stage 2: Students edit their papers. You may adjust the number of items a student is to look for so it matches the student's capability. For example, a student with difficulties in spelling may look for invented spellings only. Another student may look for three or four items on his list. You may also adjust the number of errors in that category that you expect the student to find. For some students circling and changing five invented spellings may be sufficient.

Lesson Extension: Teacher Editing

The teacher should proofread each student's paper just prior to the time it goes to publication. Not everything a student writes will be published. Papers that do not go to publication are not proofread. On the next-to-the-final draft the teacher provides students with feedback on the areas that the student is working on from the **What**

I can do list. A student's paper is a diagnostic tool. It confirms what the students knows, has transferred, and is practicing. It also gives you clues as to what the student should add to his list next. Often you can do a mini-lesson with the student explaining the next convention the student should focus on in the editing stage in his writing.

HOW TO PROOFREAD

Use the Checklist below to:

1. Check Your Own Paper
   - ☐ Read your paper and check for the first item.
   - ☐ Correct any mistakes you find.
   - ☐ Then read your paper again checking for the next item.
   - ☐ Do this with each item.
   - ☐ Use whatever computer aids you have available (spell checker).

MINI-LESSON 13

PROOF READING WITH EDITOR'S MARKS

Objectives

Students will demonstrate that they understand proofreading marks by using them when they edit their papers.

Time Needed

10 minutes

Materials Needed

Writing folders

Discussion

Some teachers introduce proofreading marks to their entire class. Others introduce them to individuals as they examine student papers and think the student is ready to add a new skill or strategy to the **What _______ knows about writing** list. In this lesson I assume that you will introduce the concept of proofreading symbols to the class as a whole. You may refer to the heading—**Introducing Proofreading Marks Individually**—below for one-to-one teaching or reteaching ideas.

Opening

Take a look at the cover of your folder. Each box or frame has a different word on it. Find the student who is the "writer." You have been writing like a writer. You have been revising like a writer. Now it is time to play another role: editing like a writer. Editors have special tools: proofreading marks. Editors use short-cuts to refer to items that need to be changed. Look at the proofreading marks on the inside flap of the folder."

Select one mark that you have noticed from student writings and questions that they need to work on next. Explain the selected marks. Use sentences and passages from your students' writings to illustrate the concept and the use of the symbol.

"You will be using these marks when you edit your work. Many times it is easiest to find mistakes (or things you want to change) when reading a printed copy rather than the screen. After you have a printed copy, locate changes to make and mark them with your editor's symbols. If you forget the right symbol, refer back to the symbol list on your folder."

"Open your folder to the inside cover with "What ___________ knows about writing" at the top. Under the word "Skill" write the skill you just learned."

Here are some examples:

I can:

Skill	*Date*	*Found in:*
Circle any word I'm not sure of	Jan. 15	A Surprise 3
Put capitals on the first and last words and important words in the title	Feb. 1	Together Again 2
Use ¶ to show a new paragraph is needed	Mar. 24	Grandfather's Sickness 3

"Find a paper in your folder that needs to be edited. Edited it today. When finished place it in my box so I can check it."

Introducing Proofreading Marks Individually

You might introduce a mark to a student when you see it can be used in the paper that you are editing. For example, Jason is writing lengthy stories without paragraphs. You teach Jason about paragraphs in a mini-lesson. This is the appropriate time to introduce the symbol for a new paragraph. As shown below, Jason records I can "Use ¶ to show a new paragraph is needed."

Skill	*Date*	*Found in:*
Circle any word I'm not sure of	Jan. 15	A Surprise 3
Put capitals on the first and last words and important words in the title	Feb. 1	Together Again
Use ¶ to show a new paragraph is needed	Mar. 24	Grandfather's Sickness 3

Review Needed

Obviously, students will not always apply a new concept appropriately just because it has been recorded on the **What** _________ **knows about writing** list, and you have introduced students to the proper usage. I've found that I need to remind students and reteach conventions often. However, helping student use the standard convention in their own writing is a good way to ensure that students will remember it.

CHAPTER 5 PUBLISHING

Publishing means to make one's writing public. Publishing can take place in many ways:

- reading one's work to the class
- writing for younger students and reading to them
- posting one's work on the class bulletin board
- writing for a school newsletter
- writing a book that will be bound and placed in the class library or the school library
- writing for the city newspaper
- writing to win a contest

In each instance students write for an audience, e.g., peers, younger children, parents, judges, editors, and of course, their teacher. Today there is a sense that writing is for real purposes rather than contrived tasks for a teacher to grade.

One literacy goal is for our students to view themselves as readers and writers. Most students consider themselves readers. When students have their work published, they are real authors.

Author's Chair

I first encountered the idea of the author's chair in Donald Grave's *Writing: Teachers & Children at Work*. The author's chair is a special chair that is reserved for students to share their work with the class. After a student has taken a piece of writing through revising and editing procedures and the teacher agrees that the work is ready to be presented to the class, the student reads it to the class. This is a celebration. My students often clap after the author finishes reading. Following the oral reading, the author can accept peer comments and questions. Since the piece is completed the questions are not designed to help the student revise. Questions are asked that reflect student genuine interests, e.g., "I'd like to write a poem like you did, how did you get started?" and "How did you decide on which word to make rhyme?"

The Classroom Newsletter

A classroom newsletter can serve many purposes:

1. It provides a reason for writing and an audience for student writing.
2. It provides a vehicle for you to share with parents and friends what you are studying in your class. This part can be written by the teacher and/or students.
3. It can provide an agenda of upcoming events. Again this can be written by the students.
4. It introduces students to the roles of each person needed to publish a newsletter, e.g., artists, layout, editor, editorial board, column editors, and contributors.

Sources for Publications That Publish Student Writing

Smith, Jennifer (Feb. 1988). Periodicals that Publish Children's Original Work. Language Arts, Vol. 65, No. 2, pp. 202-208.

Atwell, Nancie (1987). Appendix C: Student Writing Contests and Publications that Accept Student Work. *In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents*. Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH.

References

Graves, Donald (1983). *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work*. Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

CHAPTER 6 PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

This book is about the organizing and assessing of writing in a computer rich environment. Writing folders play an important part in both student organizing and assessing of their work. Students record future topics for writing, and the title and version (e.g., Building a Road1, Building a Road2) of each piece of writing. They can refer to these indexes for ideas to write about, what they did the day before, and what is to be done next. Checklists of strategies mastered also provide the basis for self-evaluation. In addition to providing organizational aids, the aids provide a rich description of learning. As they reflect on what they have and have not accomplished, students begin evaluating their writing.

Writing folders should not be confused with portfolios. Portfolios are products. Writing folders are day-to-day writing aids. At the end of the year, students (and their teachers) select samples of students' best work to place in portfolios along with the criteria for evaluating the samples and the students' reflections on what they have learned. Their writing folder can be cleaned out and used as their portfolio at the end of the semester or year. Portfolio assessment can provide quantative assessment (norms for comparison purposes) as well as qualitative assessment (description of what was learned, e.g., students comments on and comparison of the samples selected for their portfolios.)

The Roots of Portfolio Assessment

Teachers state:

> "The language arts sections of standardized achievement tests do not measure what I teach in writing."
>
> "Although analytic scoring* of writing samples is better than multiple choice questions, it still doesn't match my instruction."

Administrators state:

> "I'm willing to accept the idea that the way we have been evaluating student writing doesn't match what we teach, but I do need norm referenced test data to evaluate our district's writing program and report to the community."

What type of writing evaluation would meet the needs of each party? Why do the previous methods of testing student progress no longer work? First, let us examine the teaching and learning of writing in the classroom. One students writing experiences serves as an example.

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*Analytic writing assessment: A procedure for rating a student writing sample based on rater's impression of quality in particular areas such as organization, voice, language variety, and English language conventions.

Jeremy writes on many topics throughout the grading period. He writes drafts, reflects on his own and peer writing by asking "Does this communicate what the author intended?" He practices giving and receiving feedback to peers. He sticks with several of the early drafts and works until they are in final draft form. To each final draft he attaches prewriting experiences, each draft, and the questions that peers and teachers asked leading to revisions. At the conclusion of each term, he selects several pieces of writing, reflects on the differences between them, comments on what he likes and dislikes about each, and what he has learned. At the end of the school year, he selects the pieces that he want to represent his best work. He writes a cover sheet explaining what he has accomplished that year. His portfolio contains the samples and the cover sheet.

Now it is clear that multiple choice testing of specific skills does not match the thinking, writing, and communicating that occurred in his classroom. The evaluation of timed writings on assigned topics comes closer because actual student compositions are measured. Often state-wide assessment requires that students write on an assigned topic for two days. The first day they write for 20-30 minutes and on the second day they revise for 20-30 minutes. However, this procedure does not match self-selection of topics, critical thinking, giving and receiving of feedback by students, and rewriting that occurs over a longer period of time. Consequently, the idea emerged, that selected samples of real pieces of student writing (somewhat like the art student's portfolio) could be formally evaluated through the analytic scoring of the whole portfolio. In this way writing evaluation would match the way writing is being taught in process writing classrooms. The classroom teacher and student would receive valuable curricular and evaluative information from the process of constructing the portfolio and administrators and school boards would receive the comparative data they desired.

What is Writing Portfolio Assessment?

The writing portfolio concept is relatively recent and it is still evolving. Most educators agree that students' writing portfolios ought to contain selected examples of students writing. However, many questions remain. For example:

- Who selects the examples (student and/or teacher)?
- How many samples are included?
- Are the samples of best work only or a representation of best and worst work?
- What is included in a sample?
- Should the portfolio include written evaluations of the samples by the teacher and student?
- Should the portfolio be analytically scored?
- Should it include other formal and informal measures such as standardized achievement test data and student checklists?

The types of information included in a portfolio reflect the goals of the persons who use them.

What are the Goals of Portfolio Assessment?

Many people want to know how well students write and whether they are improving. Stakeholders in the school define portfolio assessment in various ways to meet their needs. Stakeholders include students, parents, teachers, site and district administrators, and school boards. Different stakeholders have different **goals** for portfolio assessment.

I have selected four articles to provide different perspectives on portfolio assessment. Arthur Costa, 1989, said "...the ultimate purpose of evaluation is to enable students to evaluate themselves." The first article *"What Makes a Portfolio a Portfolio"* by F.L Paulson, P.R. Paulson, and C.A. Meyer highlights the student's role. The authors remind us that the portfolio is something done by the student and that it offers students the opportunity to learn about their learning.

Linda Polin in *Portfolio Assessment* makes the connection between the teacher's instructional program and the resulting quality of the portfolio. Polin address questions regarding the number of pieces to include, what is included in each sample, and who selects the student samples. She also discusses the value of portfolios for teachers and students.

Kathryn Howard in *Making the Writing Portfolio Real* describes her instructional practices and shows how portfolio assessment is embedded in writing instruction. She describes how students learn to give and receive content feedback to classmates on their drafts. Students internalize this evaluative framework and use it to reflect on their own writing. Howard explains her time-table for implementation over two years.

District and site administrators, as well as school boards need the type of information that allows them to evaluate their English/language arts program as a whole and answer the question: Is it working? They need to explain the effectiveness of their program to the community. This is done through the analysis and summary of the objective scores on writing measures. Often students (with teacher input) select three of the best pieces of writing completed during the year. Each piece selected has the final copy on top with all work leading to it attached including the student's written evaluation of the product and process. Experienced judges analytically score all of the work in the portfolio.

The fourth article, *Portfolios as Large-Scale Assessment* by Jay Simmons provides information for those who need to evaluate district-wide programs. In his study, Simmons evaluated the portfolios of 27 randomly selected fifth graders. The measures included both analytical scoring of student portfolios and of a separate student writing. For the separate writing measure, students were required to write on the same topic for the same length of time. In their portfolios, students self-select samples written on any topic of choice for differing periods of time.

His findings provide helpful information regarding the value of portfolio assessment for the weakest writers, the correlation between length of time students chose to write on a piece and its quality, and genre of writing selected and writing quality. The study also serves as a model for administrators to examine who may wish to analyze district-wide findings for a reasonable cost.

The interests of the stakeholders as described in the articles are not necessarily anithetical. I hope that through these articles you will be able to examine your goals and clarify the directions for your program.

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WHAT MAKES A PORTFOLIO A PORTFOLIO?

F. Leon Paulson, Pearl R. Paulson and Carol A. Meyer

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Eight thoughtful guidelines will help educators encourage self-directed learning.

"I used all my writing skill to make this paper persuade. Word choice was very important to me." Tony (grade 4) attached these words to a paper in his writing portfolio to explain why the paper was significant to him. His self-reflective statements help illustrate a key value associated with student portfolios and a rationale for using them: portfolios permit instruction and assessment to be woven together in a way that more traditional approaches do not.

This article explores the question, "What makes a portfolio a portfolio?" Let's begin with a definition that we helped formulate while working with a group of educators from seven states under the auspices of the Northwest Evaluation Association[1]:

> A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection.

The writing portfolios used in Tony's class are in many ways similar to the portfolios artists assemble in order to gain entrance into an art school or to secure a commission. For example, the Pacific Northwest College of Art[2] gives the following rationale for portfolios:

> An application portfolio is a visual representation of who you are as an artist, your history as well as what you are currently doing... It is representing you when you are not present...Part of the evaluation of a portfolio is based on the personal choices [you] make when picking pieces for the portfolio. It tells the school something about [your] current values; that's why you will rarely get a school to be very specific about what they look for in a portfolio. [You] should not be afraid to make choices.

The Portfolio: A Powerful Concept

Portfolios have the potential to reveal a lot about their creators. They can become a window into the students' heads, a means for both staff and students to understand the educational process at the level of the individual learner. They can be powerful educational tools for encouraging students to take charge of their own learning.

> The ways I have grown in writing.
> I've learned that you can use other words that give more detail and more elaboration. Such as from bad to grim, and from big to enormous. It has been really fun comparing stories and finding out in many ways how I've grown.
> —Matt, Grade 3

Portfolios allow students to assume ownership in ways that few other instructional approaches allow. Portfolio assessment requires students to collect and reflect on examples of their work, providing both an instructional component to the curriculum and offering the opportunity for authentic assessments. If carefully assembled, portfolios become an intersection of instruction and assessment: they are not just instruction or just assessment but, rather, both. Together, instruction and assessment give more than either gives separately.

> In the pages that follow in this portfolio, you will find the work that I feel represents my strengths in my written work from my junior year at Hillsboro High School. In order that you may see the overall picture, I have included expository, informative, and creative pieces in this portfolio. All six samples were constructed in an atmosphere that provided ample time for revision and peer reviewing. Each sample represents skills that I have found to enhance the quality of my writing.
> —Michael, Grade 11

Guidelines for Realizing That Power

Fulfilling the potential of portfolios as an intersection of instruction and assessment is neither simple nor straightforward. We must find new ways for the two processes to work together. Doing so involves answering a question that has no simple answer: "What makes a portfolio a portfolio?" The portfolio is a concept that can be realized in many ways. Portfolios are as varied as the children who create them and as the classrooms in which they are found. However, to preserve those aspects of the portfolio that give the concept its power, we offer this list of guidelines[3]:

1. Developing a portfolio offers the student an opportunity to learn about learning. Therefore, the end product must contain information that shows that a student has engaged in self-reflection.

2. The portfolio is something that is done by the student, not to the student. Portfolio assessment offers a concrete way for students to learn to value their own work and, by extension, to value themselves as learners. Therefore, the student must be involved in selecting the pieces to be included.

3. The portfolio is separate and different from the student's cumulative folder. Scores and other cumulative folder information that are held in central depositories should be included in a portfolio only if they take on new meaning within the context of the other exhibits found there.

4. The portfolio must convey explicitly or implicitly the student's activities; for example, the rationale (purpose for forming the portfolio), intents (its goals), contents (the actual displays), standards (what is good and not-so-good performance), and judgments (what the contents tell us).[4]

5. The portfolio may serve a different purpose during the year from the purpose it serves at the end. Some material may be kept because it is instructional, for example, partially finished work on problem areas. At the end of the year, however, the portfolio may contain only material that the student is willing to make public.

6. A portfolio may have multiple purposes, but these must not conflict. A student's personal goals and interests are reflected in his or her selection of materials, but information included may also reflect the interests of teachers, parents, or the district. One purpose that is almost universal in student portfolios is showing progress on the goals represented in the instructional program.

7. The portfolio should contain information that illustrates growth.

   Bill
   At the beginning of the year
   I havit been yoosng periods
   　　and I am now.
   At the beginning of the year,
   I havit been yoosng sentence
   　　and I am now.
   At the beginning of the year.
   I havit been yoosng elaboration
   　　and I am now the End
   —Bill, Grade 1

   There are many ways to demonstrate growth. The most obvious is by including a series of examples of actual school performance that show how the student's skills have improved. Changes observed on interest inventories, records of outside activities such as reading, or on attitude measures are other ways to illustrate a student's growth.

8. Finally, many of the skills and techniques that are involved in producing effective portfolios do not happen by themselves. By way of support, students need models of portfolios, as well as example of how others develop and reflect upon portfolios.

There are a considerable variety of portfolio assessment projects appearing in schools, reflecting the fact that portfolio assessment is a healthy and robust concept. We recommend, however, that when designing programs or purchasing commercial portfolio assessment materials, educators reflect on the eight aspects of the portfolio that we believe give the concept its power. We offer our list as a way of initiating thoughtful critiques.

A Broad Look at Learning

Portfolios offer a way of assessing student learning that is quite different from traditional methods. While achievement tests offer outcomes in units that can be counted and accounted, portfolio assessment offers the opportunity to observe students in a broader context: taking risks, developing creative solutions, and learning to make judgments about their own performances.

A portfolio, then, is a portfolio when it provides a complex and comprehensive view of student performance in context. It is a portfolio when the student is a participant in, rather than the object of, assessment. Above all, a portfolio is a portfolio when it provides a forum that encourages students to develop the abilities needed to become independent, self-directed learners.

> Today I looked at all my stories in my writing folder. I read some of my writing since September. I noticed that I've improved some stuff...I write exciting and scary stories and now I have very good endings.
>
> —Joshua, Grade 2

[1] This working definition grew out of discussions at a conference on Aggregating Portfolio Data held at Union, Washington, in August 1990. For more information, see: *White Paper on Aggregating Portfolio Data*, rev. ed., (1990), by C. Meyer and S. Schuman, which is available from the Northwest Evaluation Association, 5 Centerpointe Dr., Lake Oswego, OR 97035.

[2] Pacific Northwest College of An, (1985), *Preparing your Application Portfolio* (pamphlet); available from the college at 1219 S.W. Park, Portland OR 97205.

[3] This list draws on discussions on metacognition (thinking about thinking) held at Northwest Evaluation Association conferences on portfolio assessment in December 1989 and August 1990. Participants were from seven states and included teachers, curriculum and assessment specialists administrators, and representatives of state departments of education. We would like to acknowledge the contributions of the 57 people who participated.

[4] See F. L. Paulson and P. R. Paulson, "How Do Portfolios Measure Up?: A Cognitive Model for Assessing Portfolios," paper presented at the conference of the Northwest Evaluation Association on Aggregating Portfolio Data, Union, Washington, August 1990 (available from the authors at the addresses given below and also through ERIC).

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PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

Linda Polin

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> ...tests widely used today are fundamentally incompatible with the kinds of changes in educational practice that are needed to meet current challenges. *(Resnick & Resnick, 1989)*

Portfolio assessment is a "hot topic" for the 90s. Portfolios are being discussed as an alternative to the use of standardized tests of multiple-choice items in the large-scale assessment of educational progress. While much of the conversation about portfolios is coming from evaluation specialists and testing agencies, most of the practical investigation and effort is coming from administrators, teachers, and state leaders concerned with the quality of large-scale assessments. Teachers and administrators have long questioned the validity of multiple-choice standardized tests, arguing that they (a) don't match up well with the local curriculum; (b) emphasize the recognition of facts, rather than the understanding of concepts; and (c) are a waste of instructional time because they provide teachers with little meaningful information about their students or their instruction.

Why Portfolios?

Just as a standardized test is intended to "sample" bits of knowledge from the larger domain of instruction, a portfolio offers a sample of student work representing the quality and diversity of that student's work over the school year. Standardized test items limit student response to the recognition and recall of information; portfolios give students latitude to display their intellectual processes and produce more complex responses. To appeal to a wide variety of school districts, standardized tests avoid ties to any particular local curriculum The contents of portfolios are deeply embedded in local instructional contexts. Standardized tests tell us little about the nature of instruction students receive; portfolios provide a sample of the very tasks students experience.

Collecting Portfolios of Work

Portfolios contain a selective variety of students' work in a number of formats. While there is not complete agreement about whether these pieces should reflect the student's best work or a typical (representative) sample, the majority argue that it ought to be the student's best work.

The portfolio should offer as much variety in task and subject as possible, but should be selected carefully. No one wants an overflowing folder of all student work. Most portfolio users suggest a modest 6 to 10 pieces in each student's portfolio, some work from earlier in the year or semester, and some from later on. All portfolio advocates require the inclusion of a "reflective" piece, written by the student, in which he or she comments on the collection. Some require that a "common" task be included in everyone's portfolio;

others require an individual's report and work from a group project.

Everyone also agrees that the included pieces should not be single products, but should have attached to them all previous work leading up to the final product. This may include outlines, notes, drafts, and other elements from the planning and revising process. Many portfolio specialists also require the teacher or student to include a description of the task and the resources available to students to complete it.

Portfolio advocates all agree that the contents of the portfolio may take many forms, including video and audio tapes, papers, computer printouts, reports, letters, sketches, semantic maps, paintings, snapshots of constructions, and so on. Buried in this odd assortment of formats are many advantages for students, especially students sometimes labelled "at risk" or "low achieving." Also, the independence from written English documents may allow a more accurate assessment of achievement or progress for students for whom English is a second language. By providing students with alternative representations of knowledge and alternative forums for the display of expertise, portfolios avoid the literate bias of schooling and align more closely with "real world" work.

Who should select the work? Every possible response has some support behind it: students only, teachers only, students and teachers together. The majority argues for student selection in conjunction with the teacher. After the student makes initial choices, the teacher and student discuss those choices. The teacher may suggest a piece he or she feels is very strong, which the student may have overlooked because it is not a favorite. In fact, reports of pilot tests of portfolios reveal that where decisions are made together, students may start out selecting favorite pieces, but soon recognize the value of "less interesting" but well executed work.

The Power of Personal Reflection

In gathering material for their portfolio and reflecting back across the accumulation of work, students gain an enlarged view of what they've learned and the progress they've made. Requiring students to include preliminary and draft work as supporting documents for their final pieces sends a message to students about the importance of process as well as product. Over time, reflected in the contents of their portfolio, students can compare early and later versions of their thinking and working processes and come to see that the changes reflected in their products are a result of their intellectual development. In the Pittsburgh Public Schools, Project PROPEL portfolios ask students to "...[take] up the stance of an informed critic or autobiographer, noticing what is characteristic, what has changed with time, or what still remains to be done" (Wolfe, 1989).

Reflecting on one's work and discussing it with someone else seems to lead students to a greater sense of pride, self-confidence, and responsibility. After some time in this system, students begin to internalize criteria for judging their work and recognize their own style and taste. If these are inevitable consequences of the portfolio process, than we have finally found an assessment strategy that doesn't waste students' time and functions as a very sophisticated learning experience.

Teachers also learn from perusing and discussing students' portfolios. Those who have used portfolios in their classes report that the experience offers them insights into the efficiency of their instructional methods as well as into the individual instructional needs and problems of their students.

Sample Portfolios

To create a middle school language arts portfolio, Linda Rief (1990) asks students to select two "best" pieces during each 6 weeks of a 12-week trimester for inclusion in their portfolios. Students may select work done for other courses, such as a social studies report. At the end of each trimester, students rearrange their work in order from most to least effective and add their self-evaluation of processes and products reflected in the chosen pieces. The portfolio from a typical student might contain 10 items: 3 poems, a narrative, a character sketch, a letter, a drawing, a play, an essay, and an acrylic collage interpreting a book the student had read. Attached to each item in the portfolio are items that "contributed" to the final product. To ensure an adequate supply of writing for students to choose from, Rief asks for five rough draft pages each week and demands a half-hour of reading each night.

To write their end-of-trimester reflective piece, Rief asks her seventh and eighth grade language arts students to address the following questions: What makes this your best piece? How did you go about writing it? What problems did you encounter? What makes your most effective piece different from your least effective piece? What goals did you set for yourself? How well did you accomplish them? What are your goals for the next semester?

Math and language arts are commonly the subjects in which portfolios are being tried out. Some of the more systematic work on large-scale use of portfolio assessment comes from math and science educators struggling to find ways to get children to reveal their math and science knowledge in problem-solving situations by writing about them. To ignore their work in portfolio assessment simply because it isn't from the field of language arts is a real mistake.

The California Assessment Program (CAP), in conjunction with UC Berkeley and UC Irvine, initiated study of the use of mathematics portfolios for assessment. Based upon those experiences, CAP produced a set of guidelines for selection and scoring of math portfolios (CAP, 1989). The portfolios should contain from six to seven items of particular kinds, with some latitude for additional pieces. Teachers, rather than students, choose the materials to include in the portfolios. The portfolios must include a minimum of four pieces of individual student work accompanied by student writing, an individual's report on a 3- to 5-day group project, and a " reflective" piece. Student work may take many forms: drawings, tables, graphs, writing, sketches, or other systems of representation. The reflective pieces are described as "math autobiographies" written at the beginning and end of the instructional period (e.g., semester). Teachers are encouraged to ask students to respond to questions such as "What do you know about addition?" To help math teachers, CAP guidelines were revised to specify how they might create writing prompts for math tasks that would allow students to display more clearly their thinking processes and abilities. For example, "Imagine you are in a country that uses base five instead of base ten. Describe aspects that would seem strange to you."

Scoring Portfolios

There is no hard and fast rule on the scoring of portfolios. CAP suggests that math portfolios be scored or ranked on the basis of three characteristics: (a) mathematical thinking, (b) breadth and richness of experience, and (c) mathematical disposition. Teachers may choose to add other criteria to the list such as the student's facility with the math tools and resources. In. Vermont, where portfolio assessment in math and language arts is a statewide commitment, portfolios will be scored by trained teams of teachers (Mills, 1989). Rather than collect and score portfolios from all students, Vermont will use a sampling procedure. The teacher teams will examine the sample and write a detailed description of student progress. This report will be disseminated to the public. The state also hopes to encourage local publication of samples of students' work from their portfolios. No doubt this will provide parents and community with a better grasp of their students abilities than will a single percentile score from standardized test.

Are portfolio assessments as good an indicator of student performance as the usual assessment? The only research study I could uncover seems to be a dissertation study undertaken by Jay Simmons out of the University of New Hampshire (Jongsma, 1989). Simmons randomly selected 27 fifth-grade students for two tasks. Students gathered up three pieces of their best school writing and also took a classic version of writing assessment— a timed test in which they wrote to a given prompt. Simmons scored the writings holistically and gathered additional data on length and time spent on the portfolio pieces. He also collected teacher and student comments. His analyses revealed that students who scored the lowest on the timed writing sample scored statistically significantly better on the essays in their portfolios. The quality of portfolio and timed sample essays of the average and above average students were not significantly different. This seems to suggest that portfolios offer important advantages to children who are most often the target of additional testing.

A Few Caveats

Of course, the quality of the portfolio experience is tempered by the quality of the instructional experience. A teacher who offers little diversity in his or her instructional tasks will not have portfolios that contain multiple formats displaying students' expertise, and will lose the opportunities that diversity offers. A teacher who provides few occasions for writing or constructing other products will restrict the choices students have available and thereby stunt opportunities for students to reflect on progress. Without an instructional emphasis on process, students will have little supporting documentation for the products they generate and restricted access to their own intellectual strategies. In fact, students and teachers in programs in which instructional goals are not clearly articulated will have difficulty selecting appropriate work. In such instances "...portfolios have the potential to become unfocused holding files for odds and ends, or worse, a place to collect more isolated skills tests" (Valencia, 1990).

It is also critical to recognize that students and teachers are not used to student involvement in evaluation. And, the self-selection and self-evaluation process students go through in constructing their portfolio collection can lead to "intimate and often frighteningly subjective talk with students" (Wolfe, 1989).

Who's Doing It?

Most of the talk about portfolio assessment is still talk, although there are at least three key places in the country where educators are putting portfolio assessment to the test. The Pittsburgh Public Schools have teamed up with Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education to establish a district-wide process for the use of portfolios in assessing student work in the arts and humanities. The entire state of Vermont has made a major, longterm commitment to the use of portfolios to assess math and language arts achievement with other subject areas slated to be included later on. In California, the California Assessment Program (CAP), in conjunction with UC Berkeley, UC Irvine, and UC Santa Barbara, has been pilot-testing the procedures for the statewide use of math portfolios. In addition, a number of schools and teachers are undertaking portfolio assessments on their own (Rief, 1990). Look for articles from them about their experiences in practitioner journals.

Resources

The projects mentioned in this article can be reached for additional information at the addresses below. Most publish quarterly or other periodic newsletters. An additional resource of interest is the Northwest Evaluation Association, a group which has established itself as a clearinghouse on information about portfolio assessment. These folks have annotated bibliographies on the subject and information on upcoming conferences being held around the country on portfolio assessment.

Mathematics Portfolio Project
California Assessment Program
PO Box 944272
Sacramento, CA 94244-2720

ARTS PROPEL
Project Zero
Harvard Graduate School of Education
13 Appian Way
Cambridge, MA 02138-3752

Vermont Portfolio Assessment Project
Vermont State Department of Education
Montpelier, VT 05602
802/828-3121

Portfolio Assessment Newsletter
Northwest Evaluation Association
5 Centerpointe Dr., Suite 100
Lake Oswego, OR 97035
503/624-1951

Portfolio Assessment Clearinghouse
c/o Sanguito Union High School
District
710 Encinitas Boulevard
Encinitas, CA 92024

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MAKING THE WRITING PORTFOLIO REAL

Kathryn Howard

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Arts PROPEL is a collaborative effort among Harvard Project Zero, a research adjunct of Harvard's Graduate School of Education; the Educational Testing Service; and teachers in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. Its purpose is to explore alternative methods of assessing student achievement in the arts. In this context, classroom teachers, researchers, and supervisors comprise an "imaginative writing team," and they meet regularly to generate ideas for innovative ways to assess student writing. Their ideas are implemented in the classrooms of the participating teachers, and the results of this practical implementation are discussed, modified, and refined as the research continues. The goal of the participating groups is to incorporate new strategies of evaluating student writing, by teachers as well as by the students themselves, into district-wide curricula.

Two years ago I was invited to participate on the PROPEL writing team in Pittsburgh. I quickly became committed to the PROPEL notion of the writing portfolio in the classroom and determined to put it into practice in order to test its effectiveness as a learning and assessment tool and to provide additional data for the researchers from Harvard and ETS. The following reflections chronicle my use of the writing portfolio with eighth graders.

Developing writing portfolios that succeed in reflecting students' views of themselves as writers is a yearlong process. It is a process of small successes rather than major breakthroughs, yet by year's end students can and in fact do come to view themselves as writers.

The students who participated with me in the portfolio process were eighth graders in middle school. Two quite distinct groups had the opportunity to experience the process, the second year's class profiting greatly from the pioneering efforts of the first. Looking back now over these two years, I can identify a series of phases which my students passed through on their way to creating portfolios and which I offer here as useful indicators of the progress of the portfolio experience.

Phase I: Modeling and Oral Reflection

For my eighth grade students, thinking of themselves as writers and thinking of writing as a continuing process were at first abstract and foreign concepts. Barriers began to come down, however, as students teamed to share their written pieces aloud—with a partner, a small group, or the entire class. Sharing included opportunities for reflection as I encouraged my students to ask each other questions such as "What did you like about the piece?" "What were you thinking about when you wrote that particular sentence or paragraph?" "What in the piece would you like to know more about?"

I learned to model these questions often, both the phrasing and intonation, because the whole notion of talking to one another about their writing was, for my students, in some respects new and threatening, challenging them in unfamiliar ways to accept responsibility and ownership for their writing. Modeling response helped to establish a classroom climate in which students could freely express their feelings about their own writing and that of others because such feelings were positively channeled.

In this atmosphere, students' responses moved in time from the superficial to the beneficial. One student, Dana, was an especially good peer model because she was always quick to praise and never failed to listen attentively. Her tone was always warm and receptive. Since she was both seriously interested in writing as well as popular among her classmates, she was a wonderful catalyst in initiating writing discussion. Yet her comments reflected the changing and deepening focus of all the students' reflection on their writing. In the beginning, Dana's response to a piece of writing was often, "That was really good," or "I like how you wrote that." By October, however, her comments began to reveal some reflection: "What would have happened if you arranged your poem in a different order than a, b, and c?" Dana's September comments helped to encourage other writers to share, but her later comments challenged students to look at their papers in different ways. And while she had begun to suggest options; they were always given in the warm tone that implied she was interested. Through the example of students like Dana, others began to share also—to share reflections that helped the students' writing to improve by opening other avenues for them to explore in the completion of a piece.

The immediate benefit of this questioning and oral reflection was that students assumed more responsibility for their work. No longer did they "write it and forget about it," as one young man was frequently heard to observe. Greg, the "I can get it right on the first draft" king, knew that Dana would not be satisfied.

As the first semester passed, questions became increasingly relevant to the writing process as well as to the written product. When students were asked to explain their choices, they were in essence being asked to confront their writing processes. As they began to answer questions such as "What was I trying to do when I wrote this paragraph?" or "What was I really trying to say in this essay?" they had a model for dealing explicitly with those issues while they were drafting instead of only during revisions. Steve, for example, became really involved in writing a list poem similar to Billy Joel's "We Didn't Start the Fire." He came to me with a list that was just that, with no patterns, no grouping, no sense of direction. He knew he needed help. He was only in the drafting stage at this point, but he was grappling with questions central to the writing of poetry. With his permission I xeroxed copies of his list for his classmates, and they suggested possible patterns, groupings, and directions for him to explore. Everyone participated in Steve's writing process because he was willing to accept their participation as fellow writers. Shortly thereafter, Steve wrote a second list poem in which he used the insights he had gained from his classmates to complete a well-crafted piece. I don't think he even noticed that I had removed myself from the loop.

Phase II: The First Written Reflection

Once a climate had been established, a written reflection by the student writers was the next logical step. If the students could talk cogently about their writing, they could also try to write about it. The written reflection came at the end of the first semester and was a clear extension of the issues of peer assessment and self assessment that they had been grappling with in Phase 1. For this self assessment, I asked students only to reflect upon themselves as writers, not to evaluate their products. In addition, I used the same form for the written reflection that I had been using since September to evaluate their work so that the format was not new or unfamiliar to them. Also, when I asked them to use my form, I wished to suggest to them that they were ready to make a "professional" self assessment.

I asked students to address only two issues:

1. Discuss one thing that is done well in your writing;
2. Discuss one thing that needs to be improved in your writing.

(Source: Pittsburgh Guide to M.A.P. Grammar and Composition)

As students shared their reflections, I was concerned because their responses focused on superficials, often form-oriented instead of content-oriented. They had been accustomed to the notion that writing was "grammar and spelling": "I need to work on my spelling," said one; "I need to improve my handwriting," said another. Some students seemed afraid to evaluate their writing in their own words. They chose to repeat comments which I had previously written on these forms about their work. Patricia even asked me what I thought she should write. Rocky, a good sport but a very reluctant writer, thought he should improve "everything" about his writing but could not yet be specific. Yet a pattern of reflection was beginning to emerge: Jennifer wrote, "I like what I say but not how I say it"; David wrote, "I'm looking for other ways to organize my thoughts." We had built a foundation.

Phase III: The Portfolio Begins

By the end of February, students had accumulated both a sufficient body of work and sufficient knowledge of the process to reflect critically on their writing and make some discriminating choices about it.

At this time we created the first actual portfolios. Since students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools regularly keep a writing folder of all their work in a given school year, I asked the students in my class to reread everything in their writing folders and to choose a piece of writing that was "important" to them. I defined important only as "having special meaning" and would not elaborate further because I did not want to influence their choices. In addition, I did not want students to make a qualitative choice based on my comments about their work. Frankly, I was curious to see which of their pieces was important to them and why. In this way I could learn more about them as writers, but they could take a further step toward writing independence. I specified that if students had trouble deciding between two pieces they could ask a classmate for advice. I would take no part in the selection process.

When students selected their first portfolio piece, I asked them to respond in writing to the following questions, which became the basis for the Second Written Reflection.

1. Why did you select this particular piece of work? (Why does this piece stand apart from your other works as important to you?)
2. What do you see as the special strengths of this work?
3. What was particularly important to you during the process of writing this piece?
4. What have you learned about writing from your work on this piece?
5. Is there a particular skill or area of interest you would like to try out in future pieces of writing that stems from your work on this piece?
6. If you could go on working on this piece, what would you do?
7. What kind of writing would you like to do in the future?

(Adapted from Roberta Camp, *Student Questionnaire—Imaginative Writing* [Draft, September 16, 1987])

During the students' work in Phase III, several encouraging developments emerged.

First, students were continuing to relax with the notion of thinking, talking, and writing about their work. Amy, for example, chose a piece of expository writing on William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. In response to the question, "Why did you select this particular piece of work?" she wrote, "I chose this because it's very different. My statements are very different from other people's that I read. I also noticed some things in the book that I used in my thesis that other people did not recognize." In response to the question, "If you could go on working on this piece, what would you do?" she wrote, "If I could continue with my piece I would read the book over again and look for hints like the one I found at the end of Chapter 5 when Ralph says 'if only they could send us something grown-up.' Then in the next chapter the dead parachuter drops from the sky." Amy's reflections showed me that she had achieved both a comfort level and a certain pride in her writing. Further, she was setting goals for herself both in her writing and her reading. Finally, she had established a bond with Golding as a fellow writer.

Second, students were quick to ask each other for help and and advice in a very serious, on-task way. The atmosphere in the class was clearly cooperative rather than competitive.

Third, students began to speak in "portfolio language"; "piece of work," "process," and "reflect" became part of their vocabulary when speaking of their writing. This was important because it allowed the class to assume a writing lab environment and set a tone wherein students could speak seriously about their work to one another. In addition, once the students had a common vocabulary, we could communicate about their experiences as writers on more common ground.

Fourth, students began to articulate the concept that the writing process and the written product were inseparable. That is, their questions to each other and to me were process-oriented. For example, "How can I rearrange the order of the lines in my poem to create a clearer picture?" was a question posed by Justin, a young writer whose most serious earlier effort at thinking about lines of poetry seemed to be, "How many lines does it have to be?"

Finally, while many students chose an "A" paper for this first portfolio piece, a few began to depend less on my evaluation of their work and more on their own, remembering the risk taken or the amount of effort spent on a particular piece. For some students, however, teacher dependency continued to be a stumbling block throughout the year. I note here that this question of teacher dependency was an on-going issue. I have tried such techniques as not putting grades on the paper, using points rather than letter grades, and removing grade forms before students put their work into their folders or portfolios. All were relatively effective, depending on the personality and competitiveness of the class. As writer independence grew, however, most students came to accept that the teacher's evaluation was only one part of a set of criteria on which they assessed their writing.

Phase IV—Portfolio Update

Thus encouraged, enriched by many excellent suggestions for future writing assignments from the Phase 111 questionnaire, each student continued to build a body of written work. At the end of March we completed our first portfolio update. It was here that I introduced the challenge of selecting both a satisfying and an unsatisfying piece of work. The students at first did not like the idea of including an unsatisfying piece in their "special" portfolio. Much discussion and reassurance were necessary before the idea took hold that both successes and "failures" demonstrate writing growth and development.

Once students accepted the concept, however, an interesting phenomenon occurred. Students had progressed to the point where works previously selected as "satisfying" were now chosen as "unsatisfying" because they were "boring," "too gimmicky," or because "the ideas were overused." Students at this point expressed a desire to include works done on their own and from other classes as part of their writing folder if not their portfolio. In addition, I sensed that students were breaking through old patterns and evaluating their work on the basis of content rather than form. Questions that reflected the notion of writing as "spelling and grammar" were replaced by "How well did I express my ideas?" and "Did I say what I wanted to say?"

All of these changes indicated to me that the students had begun to engage with their portfolios. It had taken a long time, but students now seemed to view their folders and portfolios as extensions of themselves. Students seemed to be proud of their portfolios, yet comfortable with the idea that the portfolio included an unsatisfying piece of work—as long as *they* had so categorized it. They were now confident enough to make a qualitative judgment about their own work, and they could live with their own analyses. They seemed to understand writing as a dynamic process which they could control. They were ready for the next step, the updating of their portfolios.

Specific directions for this update—The Third Written Reflection—were:

1. Read through your writing folder carefully.

2. Choose two pieces of writing:
   - one which doesn't satisfy you;
   - one which does satisfy you.

3. Think about the differences between the two pieces of writing.

4. Write down some of your ideas about your two pieces of writing:
   - Things I notice about the unsatisfying piece;
   - Things I notice about the satisfying piece.

5. You are free to keep or remove the piece of your writing which is already in your portfolio.

(Adapted from *Arts PROPEL*)

I must note here that most students kept the original portfolio piece and re-reflected on the things that made it a satisfying piece of work for them. Amber, however, perhaps my most gifted writer, moved her "most important" work of Phase 111 into the "unsatisfying" category in Phase IV, reasoning that she had rethought her standards for evaluation. She had made a perceptive decision about a quality of wordiness in her writing of which she had been previously unaware. This breakthrough was more important to her development as a writer than anything I could have suggested to her. She had discovered it herself and it became part of her personal criteria for effective writing.

Again, students made their choices independently or with classmates. I sensed that they had become resigned to or grateful for the fact that I would not participate in the selection process.

Phase V: Finalizing the Portfolio

As the school year concluded, we were ready to create our final version of the portfolios. At this point, apparently quite comfortable with the process, the students themselves requested the opportunity to revise their portfolios to include pieces written after Phase IV. The specific directions for this phase were:

1. Reread the two selections in your portfolios.

2. Reread your reflections on those pieces.
3. Reread whatever new work is now in your writing folder since the last selection process.

4. Decide whether you wish to replace either your satisfying work, your unsatisfying work, or both.

5. If you replace a piece, be sure to complete the written reflection in which you indicate the things you notice about the piece (as detailed in Phase IV).

6. In paragraph form, reflect on how you have grown and/or changed as a writer during the school year. Conclude with a paragraph evaluating your strengths and weaknesses as a writer as you prepare to enter ninth grade.

This Fourth Written reflection convinced me that a commitment to writing portfolios can be an essential tool in the development of student writers. The key, I think, is to commit to the portfolio process, rather than to the portfolio as just another file, a repository for writing. When portfolio, collection, selection, and reflection are used in concert, a very strong and positive message about writing and writing development is sent to students. Their reflections, in turn, send an equally strong and equally positive message back to the teacher. When Vicki wrote, "I've learned to edit my own work and to go over my own work and figure out what's wrong with it instead of to always run to the teacher and ask her to find out what's wrong with it for me," when Erin wrote, "I think I've learned to take my writing seriously as I write it," when Jessica wrote, "I've learned to set really high expectations for myself," I knew that my students had become writers.

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PORTFOLIOS AS LARGE-SCALE ASSESSMENT

Jay Simmons

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Most classroom teachers must labor in schools where writing continues to be tested with timed writing samples scored holistically. At best, we may ignore the results—lists of students in an order we could have guessed before hand—while we bemoan the waste of time and money. At worst, we must change good teaching in response to low scores, especially by our weakest students, on questionable tests. Yet, without a cost-effective, large-scale alternative that produces helpful suggestions for instruction, school districts are likely to continue using the tools at hand.

Classroom teachers and composition theorists have long held that single-shot, timed writing samples fail to assess writing ability in a valid, useful way. White (1985) says, "We should attempt to measure anything we call 'writing ability' by more than one writing sample and in more than one mode" (p. 118). Accordingly, some proficiency tests require several types of essays. Elbow and Belanoff (1986), however, note that the common proficiency exam "undermines good teaching by sending the wrong message about the writing process: that proficient writing means having a serious topic sprung on you (with no chance for reading, reflection, or discussion) and writing one draft (with no chance for sharing or feedback or revising)" (p.336).

Enter the portfolio. Elbow and Belanoff and others (Burnham 1986, Bishop 1987) have devised portfolio systems to evaluate merit in college composition courses. Howard Gardner of Harvard's Project Zero and his colleagues use portfolios to assess the creative work of gifted preschool and school-age children (Brandt 1988, Wolf 1989). The college programs tend to limit themselves to questions of passing or failing, while Gardner and his associates employ ethnographic techniques such as journals, interviews, and observations to measure the children's ability to produce, to perceive, and to reflect. The Educational Testing Service has employed portfolios in a Rhode Island third grade project (Benderson 1989). but as Ines Bosworth says of the method, "Big bucks are involved in portfolios" (p. 14).

One Alternative Trial

My research team in Durham, N.H., successfully field-tested a large-scale model of portfolio assessment using papers collected from twenty-seven students, randomly selected to represent the district's entire fifth grade.

We asked more questions about more papers collected from fewer students, by holistically scoring both a timed test and the three papers each student chose to represent his or her best work during the year. We recorded paper length, duration of work, mode of discourse, range of modes of discourse, and month the writing began. Both students and raters listed three strengths of the portfolio pieces.

Our weakest writers fared worst in the test. Those scoring 2 or 3 on the test had a mean portfolio score of 4.7, while *average* (4 or 5) and high (6, 7 or 8) score groups did not change significantly in the portfolio. Certainly, this finding does not surprise classroom teachers, but this new model of measurement gives us statistical evidence to support the lessons of experience.

The portfolio method also produces profiles of student writers. Average test writers in our sample wrote the shortest (296 words) portfolio papers, worked on them over the shortest duration (11.9 days), and covered the narrowest range (one mode of discourse). Middle kids, classroom teachers could have told us, tend to play it safe. Not surprisingly, those scoring highest (6, 7 or 8) worked over a longer duration (13.3 days), on the longest papers (440 words), in the most modes of discourse (3). We were surprised, however, that the lowest test score group (2 or 3), worked longest (16 days) on nearly as lengthy (410 words) papers in two modes of discourse in the portfolio. Then again, these same students showed the biggest gain (2 points on a 6 point scale) in the portfolio, driving their scores up to those of the average test score group. No wonder tests most adversely affect those who need more time and space!

Test score significantly correlated with range of modes of discourse included in the portfolio. That is, those who chose more types of writing (narrative, poetry, description, exposition, argument) for their portfolio tended to score higher on the test. Moffett (1981) says writing ability is, "the ability to do more things and to do the old things better," and this method suggests that he is right.

We found that timed-test and portfolio assessments produce essentially the same orderings of students. Remember that papers were simply selected from the cumulative writing folders, not written especially for the project. Since student writing lines up in the same order in either evaluation method, we do not need the isolation and time constraints imposed by tests to produce a valid ranking of student writers. But we do need portfolios if we are to avoid underrating student ability.

We used a general prompt in our test: "Write about something you know about and care about. Make sure your reader knows how much you know and how much you care." We wanted to allow response in as many modes of discourse as possible, since an argument, for instance, might be more complex and demand more cognitive development than a narrative (Kinneavy 1971, Moffett 1981, Ekhardt & Stewart 1981, Lunsford 1981, Flower 1981, Crowhurst & Piche 1979). We found we could score varied samples reliably. All modes of discourse were attempted in each setting, test or portfolio, except that no poems appeared in the test. Since mode of discourse was uncorrelated to test or portfolio scores, it would seem that fifth graders, regardless of relative ability, are able to choose modes within their range. Traditional large-scale measures of writing ability do not teach us about student choices.

Students more often included narratives in their portfolios than in the test, therefore, students who felt narratives were their best writing were still able to write in another mode when time did not permit a longer paper. Over half (14) of the students wrote exposition or description for the test, but 34 of their 42 portfolio pieces were narrative (24) or poetry (10). However, 12 of 14 scored better in the portfolio (the other 2 showed no gain). By combining portfolio and timed-test papers, then, we can see that fifth graders can write description and exposition when time demands it, but prefer to write narrative or poetry, in which they can write better.

Length and duration of work also tell us about the perception and reflection of writers. Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976), in studying graphic artists, found that "artists who defined their problems soon after starting work produced drawings that were less original than those who kept the problem open longer" (p. 247). Duration measures indirectly that "delay in closure (that) helps to insure that the artist will not settle for a superficial or hackneyed problem" (p. 247). Significantly, the average writer works on papers over the shortest duration, and scorers of holistic sample tests complain about the lack of flavor in samples that bulge with average scores.

We had also guessed that students would work longer on pieces as the year progressed, but the data showed otherwise. Students worked an average of four weeks on pieces begun early in the school year, two-and-a-half weeks on November to January starts, and one-and-a-half weeks on pieces begun within a month of portfolio collection. It is unclear whether students work faster on pieces as the year progresses, or papers need to "sit" before students know that they are finished. "Sitting" would eliminate from portfolio consideration longer pieces begun in the middle and later stages of the year. Periodic sampling or follow-up interviews may answer this question.

In order to assess writers' reflections on their work, we measured the degree of association between student and rater opinions of papers' strengths. Students apply widely different criteria from those of their teachers, as Newkirk (1984) and Benedict (1989) have also found. We categorized comments into five groups taken from Diederich (1974): ideas, organization, mechanics, diction, and flavor. We also added "experience," to cover references to the experience of writing or sharing the work. Teachers most often named ideas and organization as strengths of papers, while students listed flavor and experience. At best, the two groups agreed to leave certain criteria off their lists. Neither students nor teachers mentioned mechanical accuracy as a primary quality of good writing.

Test score groups showed different patterns of agreement with raters. Students receiving below average test scores and their teachers often agree that diction is not a strength of their writing. Students with average score and their raters both left flavor off their lists. I can recall many holistic scoring sessions over the years in which raters have reported finding many "2s" (on a 1-4 scale), at the same time complaining of a lack of original vocabulary or verve in the writing.

We had expected students with the highest scores to agree most with teachers, but we found the opposite: students with the highest test score and the widest range of writing in the portfolios disagreed most with teacher judgments. Perhaps the most able know their own minds. We did isolate however, four girls who did match teacher judgments (girls in our sample outscored boys, but since Hyde and Linn [1988] have found no gender differences in verbal ability, we concluded that since 7 of 9 raters were female, the girls, naturally, were more raterlike). These four girls mentioned ideas but not experience as strengths of their writing. They out scored by 2.5 points on a 6-point scale girls who said the opposite. In addition, they collected all the top scores of 8 awarded in the collection of 108 papers.

Thus informed about the behaviors and attitudes of writers of differing abilities, we may reasonably change our teaching. Those scoring lowest on the test seem to need vocabulary development and practice choosing shorter tasks when time is limited. The average writers in our fifth-grade sample need to expand the range and depth of their writing choices, while enhancing the overall flavor of the work. In narratives this may mean developing characters and motivating plot developments. While the above-average writers generally disagreed with adults about the strengths of their papers, the four writers who matched adult judgment patterns captured the highest scores. As Freedman (1979) found, even our able students need to develop an appreciation for content and organization stressed by adult judges.

Looking Ahead

We now have a method of large-scale assessment of writing ability using portfolios of students' best work in combination with timed writing samples. We can stop underestimating student ability, be more fair to our weakest writers, and profile both the habits and judgments of student writers by ability group. And, we can do all this in about the same time, and for about the same cost as our current, less informative methods. We scored the portfolios in our sample in a one-day session, the same time the district now spends scoring test papers from all fifth graders. Granted, the development of computer software to analyze these data has taken some time, but that job is now done, so future analysis can be completed more quickly .

In the spring of 1990 Seacoast Educational Services (SES), of Somersworth, N.H., a consortium of 12 school districts, will collect over 1500 papers to analyze the writing ability of a population of 4000 students in grades 5, 8, and 11. Students will be asked to save all writing completed during the year, noting the date the first draft is started and the last is finished. Students of teachers who use writing folders or portfolios in class will naturally have these drafts on hand. At most only a folder need be added to a classroom; instructional patterns need not change. When portfolios are collected from a randomly selected sample of students, students will count the length of papers in words, teachers will label each paper by mode of discourse and count the range of modes in the portfolio. Each participating student will be asked to write a timed-test sample, but the school year will be interrupted only the one time currently required for the test-only method. Scoring and reporting will proceed as they have in the past.

SES should be able to conduct this new assessment in the same time and at the same cost as it has run single-test programs. Teachers will continue to be involved in deciding the prompt, the collection dates, and the scoring method. But this year the scores will be based on writing actually completed in the course of instruction, writing chosen by students as exemplifying their best efforts. More than scores will be generated. The 12 districts and the profession will have profiles of the habits and attitudes of writers in grades 5, 8, and 11, as well as a method that can be adapted with the comments of teachers to answer more specific questions in the future.

Teachers in the pilot study, for example, were committed to student-selected portfolios, feeling that writers should stay in control of their own writing processes. Student choice did allow us to draw useful, powerful conclusions about the range of pieces chosen for the portfolio. After the scoring, however, raters were dismayed that much good writing, such as they had seen in class, had never appeared in the portfolios. One rater even found the test pieces to be superior to the portfolios. These raters suggested a "Theirs/Mine/Ours" system for upcoming years, in which students would choose one piece, the teacher would select one, and the two would collaborate on the third choice. They mentioned as well including pieces as examples of content area writing assignments. The point is, portfolios allow a classroom/assessment interaction not possible with less "naturalistic" methods. The portfolio may be redesigned to fit the writing contexts used in class, and the maintenance of a writing folder and selection of a portfolio from it may become a major teaching device for those talents of "perception" and "reflection."

Faigley, Cherry, Joliffe, and Skinner (1985) have suggested that writing ability be evaluated by a combination of ethnographic studies, text analysis, and verbal reports from writers. Teale (1988) advocates using "the means of assessment that help teachers in their day-to-day instructional decisions" (p. 175). These components are being tested by such portfolio projects as those of ETS in Rhode Island and PROPEL in Pittsburgh. Until now the cost of such a method would have been prohibitive for whole populations. If we use the statistical profiles generated by my large-scale method to identify students who exemplify common writing behaviors, these individuals may be evaluated by classroom teachers using the more informative ethnographic techniques suggested above. Districts then will have combined large-scale assessment with classroom practice in a collaborative, not adversarial, effort to evaluate student writing ability.

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My ideas to write about...

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________
6. ______________________________
7. ______________________________
8. ______________________________
9. ______________________________
10. ______________________________
11. ______________________________
12. ______________________________
13. ______________________________
14. ______________________________
15. ______________________________
16 ______________________________
17. ______________________________
18. ______________________________
19. ______________________________
20. ______________________________

What ______________ knows about writing

Skill: *Date:* *Found In:*

My pieces of writing...

Title *(file name)*	Today's Date	Type of Writing	Need to Print?	Copy in Folder?
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				
19.				
20.				
21.				
22.				
23.				
24.				

What ________ Knows About Word Processing

Skill	Date	Found In

Word Processing Skills and Strategies Key:

Opening Files

- Locates a file by name on a disk
- Opens a new file
- Opens a previously saved file

Saving Files

Saves first draft to a key word in piece	EXAMPLE: New House
Saves each revision to a key word plus a number	EXAMPLE: New House 2, New House 3
Saves while writing and does not lose text	EXAMPLE: every 10 or 15 minutes
Makes a back-up copy of files	EXAMPLE: every week

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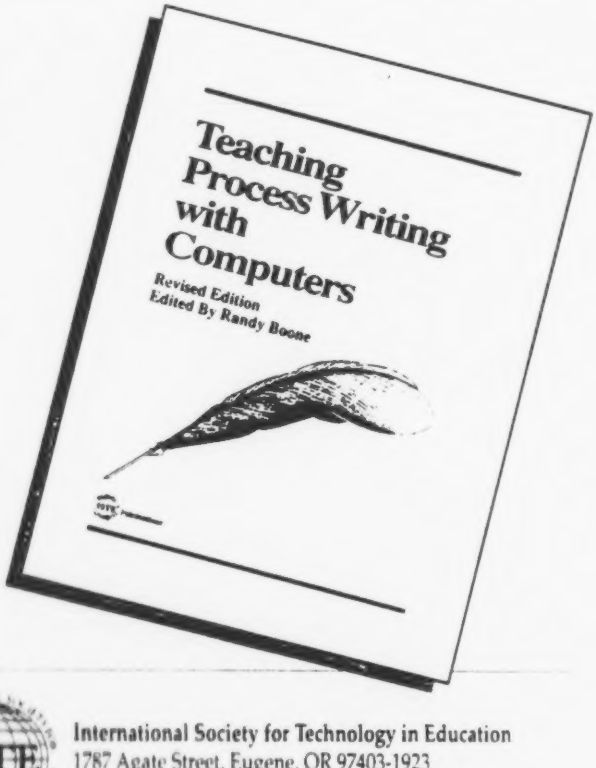

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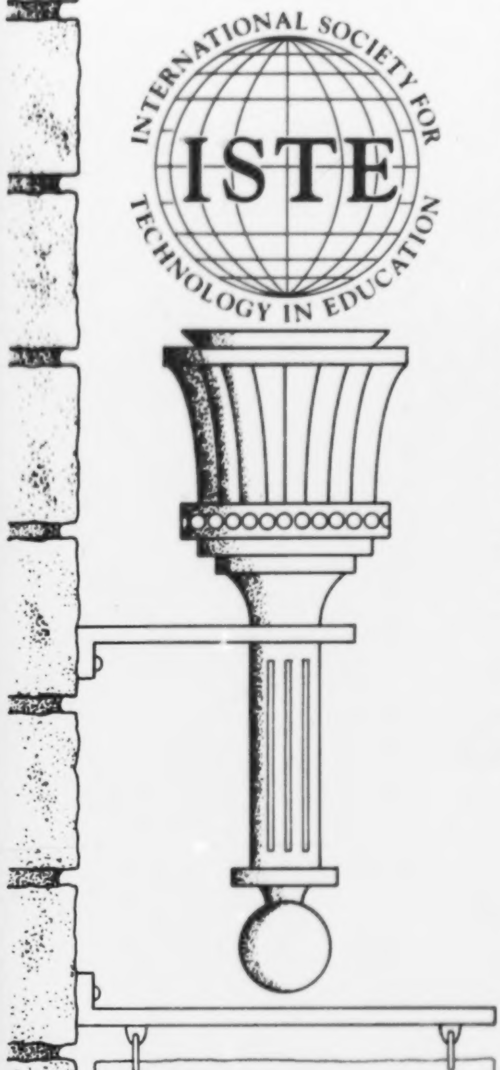
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